



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

THE ALDINE EDITION
OF THE BRITISH
POETS

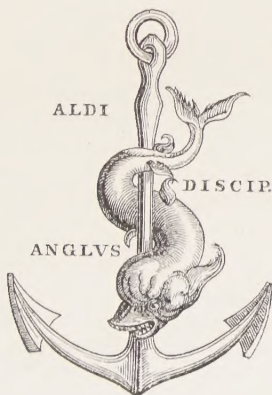


THE POEMS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER
IN SIX VOLUMES
VOL VI

THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER



WITH MEMOIR BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS



VOL VI

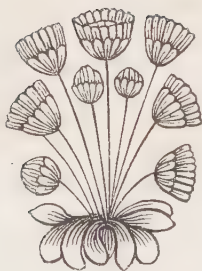
LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING

1845

CONTENTS.

VOL. VI.

	Page
Of Queen Annelida and false Arcite	1
The Complaint of the Black Knight	13
A Praise of Women	35
The House of Fame.	
Book I.	41
Book II.....	56
Book III.....	73
The Complaint of Mars and Venus	106
Of the Cuckow and the Nightingale	119
The Court of Love.....	130
Chaucer's Dream	177
The Flower and the Leaf	244
Chaucer's A. B. C.	264
Balade sent to K. Richard	271
Good Counsail of Chaucer.....	272
A Ballade of the Village without Painting.....	273
Lenvoy de Chaucer	276
Go forth king, rule thee by sapience.....	278
To his empty Purse	278
A Ballad	279
A Proverb against Covetise and Negligence.....	281
The Complaint of Pitie.....	281
Virelai	286
Chaucer's Prophecy	287
Chaucer's Words unto his own Scrivener	288





OF QUEEN ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE.

“ **O** THOU fiers God of armes Mars the rede,
That in thy frosty countrey called Thrace,
Within thy grisly temples full of drede,
Honoured art as patrone of that place,
With thee Bellona, Pallas full of grace,
Be present, and my song continue and gie,
At my beginning thus to thee I erie.

“ For it full depe is souken in my minde,
With pitous herte in English to endite,
This old story, in Latine which I finde,
Of queene Annelida and false Arcite,
That elde, which all can frete and bite,
And it hath freten many a noble story,
Hath nigh devoured out of our memory.

“ Be favourable eke thou Polimnia
On Pernaso that hath thy sisters glade,
By Elicon, not far from Cirsa,
Singest with voice memorial in the shade,
Under the laurer, which that may not fade,
And do that I my ship to haven winne,
First follow I Stace, and after him Corinne.

*Jamque domos patrias Cithie post aspera gentis,
Prælia laurigeo subeuntem Thesea curru,
Lætifici plausus missusque ad sidera vulgi, &c.*

Whan Theseus with warres long and great,
The aspre folke of Cithe had overcome,
The laurer crowned in his chaire gold beat,
Home to his country houses is ycome,
For which the people blisful all and some,
So criden, that to the sterres it went,
And him to honouren did all hir entent.

Before this duke in sign of victory,
The trompes come, and in his bauer large,
The image of Mars, and in token of glory,
Men might see of treasure many a charge,
Many a bright helm, and many a spere and targe,
Many a fresh knight, and many a blisful rout,
On horse and on foot, in all the field about.

Ipolita his wife, the hardy queene
Of Cithia, that he conquered had,
With Emily her young suster shene,
Faire in a chaire of gold he with him lad,
That all the ground about her chair she sprad
With brightness of beauty in her face,
Fulfilled of largesse and of grace.

With his triumph and laurer crowned thus,
In all the floure of fortunes yeving,
Let I this noble prince Theseus,
Toward Athenes in his way riding,
And fonde I woll in shortly to bring,
The slye way of that I gan to write,
Of queene Annelida and false Arcite.

Mars that through his furious course of ire,
The old wrath of Juno to fulfill,
Hath set the peoples hertes both on fire

Of Thebes and Grece, and everich other to kill
With bloody speres, rested never still,
But throng now here now there among hem both,
That everich other slue, so were they wroth.

For whan Amphiorax and Tideus,
Ipomedon and Partinope also
Were dedde, and slain proud Campaneus,
And whan the wretched Thebans brethren two
Were slain, and king Adrastus home ygo,
So desolate stood Thebes and so bare,
That no wight could remedy his care.

And whan the old Creon gan espy,
How that the blood royal was brought adown,
He held the citee by his tyranny,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To been his friends, and dwell in the toun,
So what for love of him, and what for awe,
The noble folke were to the towne ydrawe.

Among all these, Annelida the queene
Of Ermony was in that towne dwelling,
That fairer was than the Sonne sheene,
Throughout the world so gan her name spring,
That her to see had every wight liking,
For as of trouth is there none her liche,
Of all the women in this world riche.

Yong was this queene, of twenty yere old,
Of middle stature, and of soch fairnesse,
That Nature had a joy her to behold,
And for to spoken of her stedfastnesse,
She passed hath Penelope and Lucesse,
And shortly if she may ben comprehended,
In her might nothing been amended.

This Theban knight eke sothe to sain,
Was yong, thereto withall a lusty knight,
But he was double in love, and nothing plain,
And subtill in that craft over any wight,
And with his cunning wan this lady bright:
For so ferforth he gan her trouth assure,
That she him trusteth over any creature.

What should I sain, she loveth Arcite so
That whan that he was absent any throw,
Anone her thought her herte brast atwo,
For in her sight to her he bare him low,
So that she wende have all his herte yknow,
But he was false, it n'as but fayned chere,
As nedeth not soche crafte men to lere.

But neverthelesse full mikell businesse
Had he, er that he might his lady winne,
And swore he would dien for distresse,
Or from his witte he said he would twinne:
Alas the while, for it was routh and sinne,
That she upon his sorrowes would rue,
But nothing thinketh the false as doth the true.

Her fredome found Arcite in soch mancre,
That all was his, that she hath, moch or lite,
Ne to no creature made she cheer,
Further than it liked to Arcite,
There was no lack, with which he might her wite,
She was so ferforth yeven him to please,
That all that liked him did her ease.

There n'as to her no maner letter sent,
That touched love, from any maner wight,
That she ne shewed him, or it was brent,

So plain she was, and did her full might,
That she n'il hide nothing from her knight,
Lest he of any untrouth her upbreyde,
Without bode his herte she obeyd.

And eke he made him jalous over her,
That what that any man had to her sayd,
Anon he would praien her to swere
What was that word, or make him yvell apaid,
Than wende she out of her wit have braid,
But all was but sleight and flatterie,
Without love he fained jelousie.

And all this tooke she so debonairly,
That all his will, her thought it skilful thing
And ever the lenger she loved him tenderly,
And did him honour as he were a king,
Her herte was to him wedded with a ring,
For so ferforth upon trouth is her entent,
That where he goth, he herte with him went.

Whan she shal eat, on him is so her thought,
That well unneth of meate toke she keepe,
And whan she was to her rest brought,
On him she thought alway till that she slepe,
Whan he was absent, prively doth she wepe,
Thus liveth faire Annelida the queene,
For false Arcite, that did her all this tene,

This false Arcite, of his newfanglenesse,
For she to him so lowly was and trewe,
Tooke lesse deintee for her stedfastnesse,
And saw another lady proude and newe,
And right anon he clad him in her hewe,
Wote I not whether in white, reed, or grene,
And falsed faire Annelida the queene.

But neverthesse, great wonder was it none
Though he were false, for it is the kind of man,
Sith Lamech was, that is so long ago,
To be in love as false as ever he can,
He was the first father that began
To loven two, and was in bigamy.
And he found tents first, but if men lye.

This false Arcite, somewhat must he faine,
Whan he was false, to coveren his tratourie,
Right as an horse, that can both bite and plaine,
For he bare her in honde of treacherie,
And swore he coude her doublenesse espye,
And all was falsenesse that she to him ment,
Thus swore this thefe, and forth his way he went.

Alas what herte might endure it,
For routhe or wo, her sorrow for to tell,
Or what man hath the cunning or the wit,
Or what man might within the chambre dwell,
If I to him rehersen shall the Hell
That suffreth fayre Annelida the queene,
For false Arcite, that did her all this tene.

She wepeth, waileth, and swouneth pitously,
To ground deed she falleth as a stone
Crampisheth her limmes crokedly,
She speketh as her witte were all ago,
Other colour than ashen hath she none,
Ne none other word speketh she moch or lite,
But "Mercy cruell herte mine Arcite."

And thus endureth, til that she was so mate
That she ne hath foot, on which she may sustene,
But forth languishing ever in this estate,

Of which Arcite hath neyther routhe ne tene,
His herte was elswhere newe and grene,
That on her wo, ne deineth him not to think,
Him recketh never whether she flete or sinke.

This newe lady holdeth him so narowe,
Up by the bridel, at the staves end,
That every word he dred it as an arowe,
Her daunger made him both bowe and bend,
And as her luste, made him turne or wend,
For she ne graunted him in her living,
No grace, why that he hath to sing.

But drove him forth, unneth list her know
That he was servaunt unto her ladyship,
But lest he were proude, she helde him lowe,
Thus serveth he, without meate or sip,
She sent him now to land, and now to ship,
And for she yave him daunger all his fill,
Therefore she had him at her owne will.

Ensamble of this, ye thrifty women all,
Take hede of Annelida and false Arcite,
That for her list him her dere herte call,
And was so meke, therefore he loved her lite,
The kinde of mannes herte is to delite
On thing that straunge is, also God me save,
For what they may not get, that wold they have.

Now turne we to Annelida ayen,
That pineth day by day in languishing,
But whan she saw that her ne gate no geyn,
Upon a day full sorowfully wepyng,
She cast her for to make a complaining,
And with her owne hand she gan it write,
And sent it to her Theban knight Arcite.

THE

COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA TO FALSE ARCITE.

“ So thirled with the point of remembraunce,
The swerde of sorowe, whette with false plea-
saunce,

Mine herte bare of blisse, and black of hew
That turned is to quaking all my daunce,
My sewerty is a waped countenaunce,
Sens it awayleth nought to ben trew :
For who so trew is, it shall her rew,
That serveth love, and doth her observaunce
Alway to one, and chaungeth for no new.

“ I wote my selfe as well as any wight,
For I loved one, with all mine herte and might
More than my self an hundred thousand sith,
And called him my hertes life, my knight,
And was all his, as ferre as it was right,
And whan that he was glad, than was I blithe,
And his disease was my death as swithe,
And he ayen, his trouth hath me plight,
For evermore hys lady me to kithe.

“ Now is he false alas, and causeles,
And of my wo he is so routhles,
That with a worde him list not ones daine,
To bring ayen my sorowfull herte in pees,
For he is caught up in another lees,
Right as him list, he laugheth at my paine,
And I ne can mine herte not restraine
For to love him yet alway nevertheles,
And of all this I n’ot to whom to plaine.

“ And should I plaine, alas the hard stounde,
Unto my foe, that yave mine herte a wounde,
And yet desireth that mine harme be more,
Now certes ferther woll I never found,
None other helpe, my sores for to sound,
My desteny hath shaped so full yore,
I woll none other medicine ne lore,
I woll ben aye there I was ones bound,
That I have said, be said for evermore.

“ Alas, where is become your gentillesse,
Your words full of pleasaunce and humblenesse,
Your observaunce in so lowe manere,
Your awayting, and your besinesse,
On me that ye called your maistresse,
Your souveraine lady in this worlde here?
Alas, is there neyther worde ne chere,
Ye vouchsafe upon myne hevinesse?
Alas your love, I buy it all to dere.

“ Now certes swete, though that ye
Thus causelesse the cause be,
Of my deedly adversite,
Your manly reason ought it to respite,
To slee your frende, and namely me,
That never yet in no degre
Offended you, as wisely he
That all wote, of wo my soule quite.

“ But for I was so playne, Arcite,
In all my workes much and lite,
And was so besie you to delite,
Myne honour save, meke, kinde, and fre,
Therefore ye put in me this wite:
Alas, ye retche not a mite,

Though that the swerde of sorow bite
My wofull herte, through your cruelty.

“ My sweet foe, why do ye so for shame,
And thinke ye that furthered be your name,
To love a newe, and ben untrew aye,
And put you in slander now and blame,
And do to me adversitie and grame,
That love you most, God thou wost alwaye,
Yet turne ayen, and yet be playne some daye,
And than shall this that now is mis, ben game,
And all foryeve, while I lyve may.

“ Lo herte myne, al this is for to saine,
As whether shall I pray or els plaine,
Which is the way to done you to be trewe,
For either mote I have you in my chaine,
Or with the deth ye mote depart us twaine,
There bethe none other meane wayes new,
For God so wisely on my soule rewe,
As verily ye slaine me with the paine,
That mowe ye see unfained on mine hewe.

“ For thus ferforth have I my deth sought,
My selfe I murder with my privie thought,
For sorow and routh of your unkindnesse,
I wepe, I waile, I fast, all helpeth naught,
I voide joy that is to speake of aught,
I voide company, I flie gladnesse,
Who may avaunt her better of hevinesse,
Than I? and to this plite have ye me brought,
Without gilte, me needeth no witnesse.

“ And should I pray, and weiven womanhede,
Nay rather death, than do so foule a dede,
And aske mercy and giltlesse, what nede,

And if I plaine what life I lede,
You recketh not, that know I out of drede,
And if I unto you mine othes bede,
For mine excuse, a scorne shall be my mede,
Your chere floureth, but it woll not sede,
Full long agon I might have taken hede.

“ For though I had you to morow agayne,
I might as well hold Aprill from raine,
As holde you to maken stedfast,
Almighty God, of trouth the soverain,
Where is that trouth of man, who hath it slayn,
She that hem loveth, shall hem find as fast,
As in a tempest is a rotten mast,
Is that a tame beest, that is aye fayne
To renne away, whan he is lest agast.

“ Now mercy sweete, if I missay,
Have I aught said out of the way,
I n’ot, my witte is all away,
I fare as doth the songe of chantepleure,
For now I plaine, and now I play,
I am so mased that I dey,
Arcite hath borne away the key
Of all my world, and my good aventure.

“ For in this world there is no creature,
Walking in more discomfiture,
Than I, ne more sorowe endure,
And if I sleepe a furlonge way or tway,
Than thinketh me that your figure
Before me stant clad in asure,
Efte to profre a newe assure,
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to pray.

“ The long night, this wonder sight ydrie,
That on the day for such affray I die,
And of all this right naught ywis ye retche,
Ne nevermore mine eyen two ben drye,
And to your routh, and to your trouth I crie,
But well away, to ferre been they to fetch,
Thus holdeth me my desteny a wretch,
But me to rede out of this drede or gie,
Ne may my wit (so weake is it) not stretch.

“ Than end I thus, sith I may do no more,
I yeve it up for now and evermore,
For I shall never este putten in balaunce
My sikernesse, ne lerne of love the lore,
But as the swan, I have herde say full yore,
Ayenst his deth woll sing in his penaunce,
So sing I here the destinie and chaunce,
How that Arcite, Annelida so sore
Hath thrilled with the point of remembraunce.”

Whan that Annelida this wofull queene,
Hath of her hand written in this wise,
With face deed, betwixt pale and greene,
She fell a swoune, and sithe she gan to rise,
And unto Mars avoweth sacrifice
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere,
That shapen was, as ye may plainly here.



THE COMPLAINT OF THE BLACK KNIGHT.

THE HEAVY COMPLAINT OF A KNIGHT, FOR THAT HE
CANNOT WIN HIS LADIE'S GRACE.

IN May, whan Flora the fresh lusty quene,
Thesoile hath cladde in grene, red, and whight,
And Phebus gan to shede his stremes shene,
Amidde the Bulle, with all the beames bright,
And Lucifer, to chace away the night,
Ayen the morow our orizont hath take,
To bid all lovers out of hir slepe awake.

And hertes heavy for to recomfort,
From drierihed of heavy night sorowe,
Nature bad hem rise, and hem disport,
Ayen the goodly glad grey morowe,
And hope also, with saint Johan to borowe,
Bad in dispite of daunger and dispaire,
For to take the holsome lusty aire.

And with a sigh I gan for to abreide
Out of my slumber, and sodainly up starte,
As he (alas) that nigh for sorow deide,
My sicknesse sate aye so nie my herte,
But for to finde succour of my smart,
Or at the least some release of my peine,
That me so sore halte in every veine.

I arose anone, and thought I woulde gone
Into the woode, to heare the birdes sing,
Whan that the misty vapour was agone,
And cleare and faire was the morning,
The dewe also like silver in shining
Upon the leaves, as any baume swete,
Till fry Titan with his persant hete

Had dried up the lusty licour new,
Upon the herbes in the grene mede,
And that the floures of many divers hew,
Upon hir stalkes gon for to sprede,
And for to splay out hir leues in brede
Againe the Sunne, gold burned in his spere,
That doune to hem cast his beames clere.

And by a river forth I gan costay,
Of water clere, as birell or cristall,
Till at the last I found a little way,
Toward a parke, enclosed with a wall,
In compace rounde, and by a gate small,
Who so that would, freely might gone
Into this parke, walled with grene stone.

And in I went to heare the birdes song,
Which on the branches, both in plaine and vale,
So loud sang, that all the wood rong,
Like as it should shiver in peeeces smale,
And as me thought, that the nightingale
With so great might, her voice gan out wrest
Right as her herte for love would brest.

The soile was plaine, smoth, and wonder soft,
All oversprad with tapettes that Nature
Had made her selfe: covered eke aloft

With bowes greene, the floures for to cure,
That in hir beauty they may long endure
From all assaut of Phebus fervent fere,
Which in his sphere so hote shone and clere.

The aire attempre, and the smothe wind
Of Zepherus, among the blosomes white,
So holsome was, and so nourishing by kind,
That smale buddes, and round blosomes lite,
In maner gan of hir brethe delite,
To yeve us hope there fruite shall take
Ayenst autumnne redy for to shake.

I saw the Daphene closed under rinde,
Greene laurer, and the holsome pine,
The mirre also thit wepeth ever of kinde,
The cedres hie, upright as a line,
The filbert eke, that lowe doth encline
Her bowes grene, to the earth adoun,
Unto her knight called Demophoun.

There sawe I eke the fresh hauthorne
In white motley, that so swote doth smell,
Ashe, firre, and oke, with many a yong acorn,
And many a tree mo than I can tell,
And me beforne I sawe a little well,
That had his course, as I gan beholde,
Under an hill, with quicke stremes colde.

The gravel gold, the water pure as glasse,
The bankes round, the well environyng,
And soft as velvet the yonge grasse
That thereupon lustely came springyng,
The sute of trees about compassyng,
Hir shadow east, closing the well round,
And all the herbes growing on the ground.

The water holsome was, and so vertuous,
Through might of herbes growyng beside,
Not like the welle where as Narcissus
Yslaine was, through vengeaunce of Cupide,
Where so covertly he did hide
The graine of death upon eche brinke,
That death mote folow, who that ever drinke.

Ne like the pitte of the Pegace,
Under Pernaso, where poets slept,
Nor like the welle of pure chastite,
Which that Diane with her nimphes kept,
Whan she naked into the water lepte,
That slowe Acteon with her hondes fell,
Onely for he came so nigh the well.

But this welle that I here of rehearse,
So holsome was, that it would aswage,
Bollen hertes, and the venom pearce,
Of pensifched, with all the cruell rage,
And overmore refresh the viage
Of hem that were in any werinesse,
Of great labour, or fallen in distresse.

And I that had through daunger and disdain
So drye a thrust, thought I would assay
To taste a draught of this welle or twain,
My bitter langour of it might alay,
And on the banke anone doun I lay,
And with mine hed unto the welle I raught,
And of the water dranke I a good draught.

Wherof me thought I was refreshed wele,
Of the brennyng that sate so nigh my herte,
That verily anone I gan to fele

An huge parte released of my smart,
And therewithall anone up I start,
And thought I would walke and see more,
Forth in the parke, and in the holtes hore.

And through a laund as I yede apace,
And gan about fast to behold,
I found anone a delectable place,
That was beset with trees young and old,
Whose names here for me shall not be told,
Amidde of which stood an herber greene,
That benched was, with colours new and clene.

This herber was full of floures gende,
Into the which, as I beholde gan,
Betwixt an hulseere and a woodbende,
As I was ware, I saw where lay a man
In blacke, and white colour pale and wan,
And wonder deadly also of his hewe,
Of hurtes grene, and fresh woundes new.

And overmore distrayned with sicknesse
Beside all this he was full greuously,
For upon him he had an hote accesse,
That day by day him shooke full pitously,
So that for constrayning of his malady,
And hertely wo, thus lying all alone,
It was a death for to hear him grone.

Wherof astonied, my fote I gan withdraw,
Greatly wondring what it might be,
That he so lay and had no felaw,
Ne that I could no wight with him see,
Wherof I had routhe, and eke pite,
And gan anone, so softly as I coude,
Among the bushes prively me to shroude.

If that I might in any wise aspy,
What was the cause of his deedly wo,
Or why that he so pitously gan cry
On his fortune, and on ure also,
With all my might I laid an eare to,
Every word to marke what he said,
Out of his swough amonge as he abraid.

But first, if I should make mencion
Of his person, and plainly him discribe,
He was in sothe, without excepcion,
To speake of manhood, one the best on live,
There may no man ayen trouth strive,
For of his tyme, and of his age also,
He proved was, there men shuld have ado.

For one of the best therto of brede and length
So well ymade by good proporcion,
If he had be in his deliver strength,
But thought and sicknesse were occasion
That he thus lay in lamentacion,
Gruffe on the ground, in place desolate,
Sole by himselfe, awhaped and amate.

And for me seemeth that it is fitting
His wordes all to put in remembraunce,
To me that heard all his complaining,
And all the ground of his wofull chaunce,
If there withall I may you do pleasaunce,
I woll to you so as I can anone,
Lyke as he sayd, rehearce everichone.

But who shall helpe me now to complain,
Or who shall now my stile gie or lede,
O Niobe, let now thy teares rain

In to my penne, and helpe eke in nede,
Thou wofull Myrre that felest my herte blede
Of pitous wo, and mine hand eke quake,
Whan that I write, for this mannes sake.

For unto wo accordeth complayning,
And dolefull chere unto heavinesse,
To sorow also, sighing and weping,
And pitous mourning unto drerinesse,
And who that shall write of distresse,
In party needeth to know feelingly,
Cause and roote of all soch malady.

But I alas, that am of witte but dull,
And have no knowing of such matere,
For to discrive, and write at the full
The wofull complaint, which that ye shall here,
But even like as doth a skrivenere,
That can no more what that he shall write,
But as his maister beside doth endite.

Right so fare I, that of no sentement,
Say right naught in conclusion,
But as I herde whan I was present,
This man complaine, with a pitous soun,
For even like without addicioun,
Or disencrease, cyther more or lesse,
For to reherse anone I woll me dresse.

And if that any now be in this place,
That fele in love brenning of fervence,
Or hindred were to his ladies grace,
With false tonges, that with pestilence
Slee trewe men, that never did offence
In worde nor deed, ne in hir entent,
If any such be here now present,

Let him of routh lay to audience,
With doleful chere, and sobre countenaunce,
To here this man, by full hye sentence,
His mortall wo, and his perturbaunce,
Complayning, now lying in a traunce,
With lookes upcast, and rufull chere,
Theffect of which was as ye shall here.

“ The thought oppressed with inward sighs sore,
The painful life, the body languishing,
The woful gost, the herte rent and tore,
The pitous chere pale in complayning,
The deedly face, like ashes in shining,
The salte teares that from mine eyen fall,
Percel declare ground of my paynes all.

“ Whose herte is ground to blede in hevinesse,
The thought receipt of wo, and of complaint,
The brest is chest of dole and drerinesse,
The body eke so feeble and so faint,
With hote and colde mine accesse is so maint,
That now I chiver, for default of heat,
And hote as glede, now sodainly I sweat.

“ Now hote as fire, now colde as ashes deed,
Now hote for cold, now cold for heat againe,
Now cold as yse, now as coles reed,
For heate I breune, and thus betwixe twaine,
I possed am, and all forecast in paine,
So that my heate plainly as I fele,
Of greevous colde is cause every dele.

“ This is the colde of inward hie disdain,
Colde of dispite, and colde of cruell hate,
This is the colde that ever doth his besie pain,

Ayenst trouth to fight and debate,
This is the colde that the fire abate
Of trewe meaning, alas the harde while,
This is the colde that woll me begile.

“ For ever the better that in trouth I ment,
With all my might faithfully to serve,
With herte and all to be diligent,
The lesse thanke, alas I can deserve :
Thus for my trouth danger doth me sterve,
For one that should my death of mercy let,
Hath made dispite new his swerde to whet

“ Against me, and his arowes to file,
To take vengeance of wilfull cruelte,
And tonges false through hir sleightly wile,
Han gonne a werre that will not stinted be,
And false envie, wrath and enmite,
Have conspired against all right and law,
Of hir malice, that trouth shall be slaw.

“ And Malebouche, gan first the tale tell,
To sclaunder Trough of indignacion,
And False-reporte so loude range the bell,
That Mischeefe and False-suspencion
Have Trough brought to his dampnacion,
So that alas, wrongfully he dieth,
And Falsenesse now his place occupieth.

“ And entred is in to Trouthes londe,
And hath thereof the full possession,
O rightfull God that first the trouth fonde,
How may thou suffre soch oppression,
That Falsheed should have jurisdiction
In trouthes right to flee him gittles,
In his fraunchise he may not live in pees.

“ Falsly accused, and of his fone forjudged,
Without answeare, while he was absent,
He damned was, and may not be excused,
For cruelte sate in judgement,
Of hastinesse without advisement,
And badde Disdaine do execute anone,
His judgement in presence of his fone.

“ Attourney may none admitted been
To excuse Trough, ne a worde to speke,
To Faith or othe the judge list not seen,
There is no game, but he will be wreke :
O Lord of trouth to thee I call and clepe,
How may thou see thus in thy presence,
Without mercy murdred innocence.

“ Now God that art of trouth souveraine,
And seest how I lie for trouth bound,
So sore knit in loves firie chaine, [wound,
Even at the death through girte with many a
That likely are never for to sound,
And for my trouth am dampned to the death,
And not abide, but draw along the breath :

“ Consider and see in thine eternal right,
How that mine herte professed whilom was,
For to be trewe with all my full might,
Onely to one the which now alas,
Of volunte without any trespas,
My accusours hath taken unto grace,
And cherisheth hem my death to purchace.

“ What meaneth this? what is this wonder ure?
Of purveyaunce if I shall it call,
Of god of love, that false hem so assure,
And trewe alas, downe of the whele ben fall,

And yet in sothe this is the worst of all,
That Falshed wrongfully of Troth hath the name,
And Trough ayenward of Falshed beareth the
blame.

“ This blind chaunce, this stormy aventure,
In love hath most his experience,
For who that doth with trouth most his cure,
Shall for his mede finde most offence,
That serveth love with all his diligence :
For who can faine under lowlyhede,
Ne fayleth not to finde grace and spede.

“ For I loved one, full long sith agone,
With all mine herte, body and full might,
And to be deed my herte can not gone
From his heste, but hold that he hath hight,
Though I be banished out of her sight,
And by her mouth dampned that I shall dey,
Unto my hest, yet I will ever obey.

“ For ever sith that the world began,
Who so liste looke, and in story rede,
He shall aye find that the trewe man
Was put abacke, whereas the falshede
Yfurthered was : for Love taketh none hede
To slee the trew, and hath of hem no charge,
Where as the false goeth frely at hir large.

“ I take record of Palamides,
The trewe man, the noble worthy knight,
That ever loved, and of his paine no relees,
Notwithstanding his manhood and his might,
Love unto him did full great unright,
For aye the bet he did in chevalrie,
The more he was hindred by envie.

“ And aye the better he did in every place,
Through his knighthood and busie payne,
The ferder was he from his ladies grace,
For to her mercy might he never attayne,
And to his death he coud it not refrayne,
For no daungere, but aye obey and serve,
As he best coude, plainly till he sterve.

“ What was the fine also of Hercules,
For all his conquest and his worthinesse,
That was of strength alone peerles,
For like as bookes of him list expresse,
He set pillers through his hie prowess,
Away at Gades, for to signifie,
That no man might him passe in chevalrie.

“ The which pillers ferre beyond Inde,
Be set of gold, for a remembraunce :
And for all that was he set behinde,
With hem that love list feebly avaunce,
For him set last upon a daunce,
Against whom helpe may no strife,
For all his trouth he lost his life.

“ Phebus also for his pleasaunt light,
Whan that he went here in earth lowe,
Unto the herte with Venus sight,
Ywounded was, through Cupides bowe,
And yet his lady list him not to knowe,
Though for her love his herte did blede,
She let him go, and toke of him no hede.

“ What shall I say of yonge Piramus?
Of trewe Tristram, for all his hie renowne,
Of Achilles, or of Antonius,

Of Arcite, or of him Palemoune,
What was the end of hir passioune,
But after sorow death, and than hir grave,
Lo here the guerdon that these lovers have.

“ But false Jason with his doublenesse,
That was untrewed at Colcos to Medee,
And Theseus, roote of unkindnesse,
And with these two eke the false Enee.
Lo thus the false aye in one degree,
Had in love hir lust and all hir will,
And save falshood, there was none other skill.

“ Of Thebes eke the false Arcite,
And Demophon eke for his slouth,
They had hir lust and all that might delite,
For all hir falshood and great untrouth :
Thus ever Love alas, and that is routh,
His false lieges forthereth what he may,
And sleeth the trewe ungoodly day by day.

“ For trewe Adon was slaine with the bore,
Amidde the forest in the grene shade,
For Venus love he felt all the sore,
But Vulcanus with her no mercy made,
The foule chorle had many nights glade,
Where Mars her knight and her man,
To find mercy comfort none he can.

“ Also the yonge fresh Ipomedes,
So lustly free as of his corage,
That for to serve with all his herte he ches
Athalanta, so faire of her visage,
But Love alas quite him so his wage
With cruell daunger plainly at the last,
That with the death guerdonlesse he past.

“ Lo here the fine of Loves service,
Lo how that Love can his servaunts quite,
Lo how he can his faithfull men dispise,
To slee the trewe men, and false to respite,
Lo how he doth the swerde of sorow bite
In hertes, such as most his lust obey,
To save the false and do the trewe dey.

“ For faith nor othe, worde, ne assuraunce,
Trewe meaning, awaite, or businesse,
Still porte, ne faithfull attendaunce,
Manhood ne might in armes worthinesse,
Pursute of worship nor hie prowesse,
In straunge land riding ne travaile,
Full litell or nought in love doth availe.

“ Perill of death, nor in see ne land,
Hunger ne thrust, sorow ne sicknesse,
Ne great emprises for to take in hand,
Sheding of blood, ne manfull hardinesse,
Ne oft wounding at sautes by distresse,
Nor in parting of life nor death also,
All is for nought, Love taketh no heed thereto

“ But lesings with hir flatterie,
Through hir falshede, and with hir doublenesse,
With tales new, and many fained lie,
By false semblaunt, and counterfeit humblesse,
Under colour depaint with stedfastnesse,
With fraud covered under a pitous face,
Accept be now rathest unto grace.

“ And can himselfe now best magnifie
With fained port and presumption,
They haunce hir cause with false surquedrie,

Under meaning of double entention,
To thinke one in hir opinion,
And say another, to set himselfe aloft,
And hinder trouth, as it is seene full oft.

“ The which thing I buy now all too deare,
Thanked be Venus, and the god Cupide,
As it is seene by mine oppressed cheare,
And by his arrowes that sticken in my side,
That save death I nothing abide
Fro day to day, alas the hard while,
Whan ever his dart that him list to file.

“ My wofull herte for to rive atwo,
For faut of mercy, and lacke of pite
Of her that causeth all my paine and wo,
And list not ones of grace for to see
Unto my trouth through her cruelte,
And most of all I me complaine,
That she hath joy to laugh at my paine.

“ And wilfully hath my death sworne,
All guiltlesse, and wote no cause why,
Save for the trouth that I had aforne
To her alone to serve faithfully,
O god of love, unto thee I cry,
And to thy blind double deite,
Of this great wrong I complaine me.

“ And unto thy stormy wilfull variaunce,
Ymeint with change and great unstablenesse,
Now up, now down, so renning is thy chance,
That thee to trust may be no sikernesse,
I wite it nothing but thy doublenesse,
And who that is an archer, and is blend,
Marketh nothing, but shooteth by wend.

“ And for that he hath no discretion,
Without advise he let his arrow go,
For lacke of sight, and also of reason,
In his shooting it happeth ofte so,
To hurt his friend rather than his fo,
So doth this god with his sharpe flone,
The trew sleeth, and letteth the false gone.

“ And of his wounding this is the worst of all,
Whan he hurt doeth to so cruell wretch,
And maketh the sicke for to cry and call
Unto his foe for to be his leche,
And hard it is for a man to seche
Upon the point of death in jeopardy,
Unto his foe to find a remedie.

“ Thus fareth it now even by me,
That to my foe that gave my herte a wound,
Mote aske grace, mercy, and pite,
And namely there where none may be found,
For now my sore my leche will confound,
And god of kind so hath set mine ure,
My lives foe to have my wound in cure.

“ Alas the while now that I was borne,
Or that I ever saw the bright Sonne,
For now I see that full long aforne,
Or I was borne, my desteny was sponne
By Parcas sisterne, to slee me if they conne,
For they my death shopen or my shert,
Only for trouth, I may it not astert.

“ The mighty goddesse also of Nature,
That under God hath the governaunce,
Of worldly things committed to her cure,

Disposed have through her wise purveiance,
To give my lady so much suffisaunce
Of all vertues, and therewithall purvide,
To murder trouth, hath take danger to gide.

“ For bounte, beaute, shape, and seemelihede,
Prudence, wit, passingly fairenesse,
Benigne port, glad chere, with lowlihede,
Of womanhede right plenteous largenesse,
Nature did in her fully empresse,
Whan she her wrought, and alderlast Disdain,
To hinder trouth, she made her chamberlain.

“ Whan Mistrust also, and False-suspection,
With Misbeleve she made for to be
Cheefe of counsaile to this conclusion,
For to exile trouth, and eke pite,
Out of her court to make mercy flee,
So that dispite now holdeth forth her reigne,
Through hasty bileve of tales that men feigne.

“ And thus I am for my trouth alas
Murdred and slain, with words sharp and kene,
Guiltlesse God wote of all trespas,
And lie and blede upon this cold grene,
Now mercy swete, mercy my lives quene,
And to your grace of mercy yet I prey,
In your service that your man may dey.

“ But if so be that I shall die algate,
And that I shall none other mercy have,
Yet of my death let this been the date,
That by your wil I was broght to my grave,
Or hastely, if that you list me save,
My sharpe wounds that ake so and blede,
Of mercy charme, and also of womanhede.

“ For other charme plainly is there none,
But only mercy, to helpe in this case,
For though my wounds bleed ever in one,
My life, my death, standeth in your grace,
And though my guilt be nothing, alas,
I aske mercy in all my best entent,
Ready to die, if that ye assent.

“ For there against shall I never strive
In word ne werke, plainely I ne may,
For lever I have than to be alive
To die soothly, and it be to her pay,
Ye though it be this same day,
Or whan that ever her list to devise,
Suffiseth me to die in your servise.

“ And God, that knowest the thought of every
wight
Right as it is, in every thing thou maist see,
Yet ere I die, with all my full might,
Lowly I pray to graunt unto mee,
That ye goodly, faire, fresh, and free,
Which onely sle me for default of routh,
Or that I die, ye may know my trouth.

“ For that in sooth sufficeth me,
And she it know in every circumstaunce,
And after I am well paid that she
If that her list of death to do vengeance
Unto me, that am under her ligeaunce,
It sit me not her doome to disobey,
But at her lust wilfully to deye.

“ Without grutching or rebellion
In will or word, holy I assent,
Or any manner contradiction,

Fully to be at her commaundement,
And if I die in my testament
My herte I send, and my spirit also,
What so ever she list with hem to do.

“ And alderlast to her womanhede,
And to her mercy me I recommaund,
That lie now here betwixe hope and drede,
Abiding plainly what she list commaund,
For utterly this n’is no demaund
Welcome to me while me lasteth breath,
Right at her choice, where it be life or death.

“ In this matter more what might I saine,
Sith in her hand, and in her will is all,
But life and death, my joy, and all my paine,
And finally my best hold I shall,
Till my spirit by desteny fatall,
Whan that her list fro my body wend,
Have here my trouth, and thus I make an end.”

And with that word he gan sigh as sore,
Like as his herte rive would atwaine,
And held his peace, and spake no word more,
But for to see his wo and mortal paine,
The teares gonne fro mine eyen raine
Full pitously, for very inward routh,
That I him saw, so long wishing for trouth.

And all this while my selfe I kepte close
Among the bowes, and my selfe gonne hide,
Till at the last the wofull man arose,
And to a lodge went there beside,
Where all the May his custome was t’abide,
Sole to complaine of his paines kene,
From yere to yere, under the bowes grene.

And for bicause that it drew to the night,
And that the Sunne his arke diurnal
Ypassed was, so that his persaunt light,
His bright beams and his streams all
Were in the waves of the water fall,
Under the bordure of our occian,
His chaire of gold, his course so swiftly ran :

And while the twilight and the rowes rede
Of Phebus light were deaurate a lite,
A penne I tooke, and gan me fast spede
The wofull plaint of this man to write,
Word by word, as he did endite,
Like as I heard, and coud hem tho report,
I have here set, your hertes to disport.

If ought be misse, lay the wite on me,
For I am worthy for to beare the blame,
If any thing misse reported be,
To make this ditie for to seeme lame,
Through mine unconning, but for to sain the same,
Like as this manne his complaint did expresse,
I aske mercy and forgivenessse.

And as I wrote, me thought I saw aferre,
Ferre in the west lustely appere
Esperus the goodly bright sterre,
So glad, so faire, so persaunt eke of chere,
I mean Venus with her beames clere,
That heavy hertes only to releve,
Is wont of custome for to shew at eve.

And I as fast fell adown on my knee,
And even thus to her gan I to prey :
“ O lady Venus so faire upon to see,

Let not this man for his trouth dey,
For that joy thou haddest whan thou ley
With Mars thy knight, whan Vulcanus fond,
And with a chaine unvisibile you bond

“ Togider both tway in the same while,
That all the court above celestially,
At your shame gan laugh and smile :
Ah, faire lady willy fond at all,
Comfort to carefull, O goddesse immortall,
Be helping now, and do thy diligence,
To let the streames of thine influence

“ Descend downe, in forthering of the trouth,
Namely of hem that lie in sorrow bound,
Shew now thou might, and on hir wo have routh,
Ere false daunger slee hem and confound :
And specially let thy might be found,
For so to cover what so that thou may
The true man that in the herber lay.

“ And all true forther for his sake,
O glad sterre, O lady Venus mine,
And cause his lady him to grace take,
Her herte of stele to mercy so encline,
Ere that thy bemes go up to decline,
And ere that thou now go fro us adoun,
For that love thou haddest to Adoun.”

And whan she was gone to her rest,
I rose anone, and home to bed went,
Forweary, me thought it for the best,
Praying thus in all my best entent,
That all trew, that be with daunger shent,
With mercy may in release of hir paine,
Recured be, ere May come este againe.

And for that I ne may no lenger wake,
Farewell ye lovers all that be trew,
Praying to God, and thus my leve I take,
That ere the Sunne to morrow be risen new,
And ere he have ayen rosen hew
That each of you may have such a grace,
His owne lady in armes to embrace.

I meane thus, in all honesty,
Without more ye may togider speake
What so ye list at good liberty,
That each may to other hir herte breke,
On jelousies onely to be wreke,
That hath so long of his mallice and envy
Werred trouth with his tyranny.

LENVOYE.

Princesse, pleaseth it to your benignitie
This little ditie to have in mind,
Of womanhede also for to see,
Your man may your mercy find,
And pity eke, that long hath be behind,
Let him againe be provoked to grace,
For by my trouth it is against kind,
False daunger to occupy his place.

Go little quaire unto my lives queene
And my very hertes souveraine,
And be right glad for she shall thee scene,
Such is thy grace, but I alas in paine
Am left behind, and n'ot to whom to plaine,
For mercy, ruth, grace, and eke pite
Exiled be, that I may not attaine,
Recure to find of mine adversite.

EXPLICIT.



A PRAISE OF WOMEN.

ALL tho that list of women evill to speke,
And sain of hem worse than they deserve,
I pray to god that hir neckes to breke,
Or on some evil death mote tho janglers sterve
For every man were holden hem to serve,
And do hem worship, honour, and servise,
In every manner that they best coud devise.

For we ought first to think on what manere
They bring us forth, and what pain they endure
First in our birth, and sith fro yere to yere
How busely they done their busie cure,
To keepe us fro every misaventure
In our youth whan we have no might
Our selfe to keepe, neither by day nor night.

Alas, how may we say on hem but wele,
Of whom we were fostred and ybore,
And ben all our succour, and ever true as stele,
And for our sake full oft they suffer sore,
Without women were all our joy lore,
Wherfore we ought all women to obey
In all goodnesse, I can no more say.

This is well knowne, and hath ben or this,
That women ben cause of all lightnesse,

Of knighthood, norture, eschuing all mallis,
Encrease of worship, and of all worthinesse,
Thereto curteis and meke, and ground of all good-
Glad and merry, and true in every wise [nesse,
That any gentill herte can thinke or devise.

And though any would trust to your untruth,
And to your faire words would aught assent,
In good faith me thinketh it wer great ruth,
That other women should for hir gilt be shent,
That never knew, ne wist nought of hir entent,
Ne list not to heare tho faire words ye write,
Which ye you paine fro day to day t'endite.

But who may beware of your tales untrue,
That ye so busily paint and endite,
For ye will swere that ye never knew,
Ne saw the woman, neither much ne lite,
Save only her, to whom ye had delite,
As for to serve of all that ever ye sey,
And for her love must ye needs dey.

Than will ye swere that ye knew never before
What Love was, ne his dredfull observaunce,
But now ye feele that he can wound sore,
Wherfore ye put you into her governaunce,
Whom Love hath ordeind you to serve and do
plesaunce

With al your might your little lives space,
Which endeth soone, but if she do you grace.

And than to bed will he soone draw,
And soone sicke ye will you than faine,
And swere fast your lady hath you slaw,
And brought you suddainly in so high a paine

That fro your death may no man you restraine,
With a daungerous looke of her eyen two,
That to your death must ye needs go,

Thus will ye morne, thus will ye sigh sore,
As though your herte anon in two wold brest,
And swere fast that ye may live no more,
Mine owne lady, that might if ye lest
Bring mine herte somedele into rest,
As if you list mercy on me to have,
Thus your untrouth will ever mercy crave.

Thus woll ye plain, tho ye nothing smarte,
These innocent creatures for to beguile,
And swere to hem, so wounded is your harte
For hir love, that ye may live no while.
Scarsly so long as one might go a mile,
So hieth death to bring you to an end,
But if your souverain lady list you to amend.

And if for routh she comfort you in any wise
For pity of your false othes sere,
So that innocent weneth that it be as you devise,
And weneth your herte be as she may here,
Thus for to comfort and somewhat do you chere:
Than woll these janglers deme of her full ill,
And saine that ye have her fully at your will.

Lo how ready hir tonges been, and prest
To speake harme of women causelesse,
Alas, why might ye not as well say the best,
As for to deme hem thus guiltlesse,
In your herte ywis there is no gentilnesse,
That of your own gilt list thus women fame,
Now by my trouth, me think ye be too blame.

For of women cometh this worldly wele,
Wherefore we ought to worship hem evermore,
And though it mishap one, we ought for to hele,
For it is all through our false lore,
That day and night we paine us evermore
With many an oth, these women to beguile
With false tales, and many a wicked wile.

And if falshede should be reckened and told
In women, ywis full trouth were,
Not as in men, by a thousand fold,
Fro all vices ywis they stand cleare,
In any thing that I could of heare,
But if enticing of these men it make,
That hem to flatteren connen never slake.

I would fain wete where ever ye coud here,
Without mens tising, what women did amis,
Forther ye may get hem, ye lie fro yere to yere
And many a gabbing ye make to hem ywis,
For I could never heare, ne knowen ere this,
Where ever ye coud find in any place,
That ever women besought you of grace.

There ye you pain, with all your ful might,
With all your herte, and all your businesse,
To pleasen hem both by day and night,
Praying hem of hir grace and gentillesse,
To have pitie upon your great distresse,
And that they would on your paine have routh,
And slee you not, sens ye meane but trouth.

Thus may ye see that they ben faultlesse,
And innocent to all your werkes slie,
And all your crafts that touch falsenesse,

They know hem not, ne may hem not espie,
So sweare ye, that ye must needs die,
But if they would of hir womanhead
Upon you rew, ere that ye be dead.

And than your lady, and your hertes queene
Ye call hem, and therewith ye sighe sore,
And say, " My lady I trow that it be seene
In what plite that I have lived full yore,
But now I hope that ye woll no more
In these paines suffer me for to dwell,
For all goodnesse ywis ye be the well."

Lo which a painted processe can ye make,
These harmlesse creatures for to beguile,
And whan they slepe, ye paine you to wake,
And to bethinke you on many a wicked wile,
But ye shall see the day that ye shall curse the
That ye so busily did your entent [while
Hem to beguile, that falshed never meant.

For this ye know wel, though I would lie,
In women is all trouth and stedfastnesse,
For in good faith I never of hem sie
But much worship, bountie, and gentilnesse,
Right comming, faire, and full of meeknesse,
Good and glad, and lowly I you ensure,
Is this goodly angellike creature.

And if it hap a man be in disease,
She doeth her businesse, and her full paine
With al her might, him to comfort and please
If fro his disease she might him restraine,
In word ne deed ywis she woll not faine,
But with all her might she doth her businesse
To bring him out of his heavinesse,

Lo what gentillesse these women have,
If we could know it for our rudenesse,
How busie they be us to keepe and save,
Both in heale, and also in sicknesse,
And alway right sorrie for our distresse,
In every manner, thus shew they routh,
That in hem is all goodnesse and trouth.

And sith we find in hem gentilnesse and trouth,
Worship, bountie, and kindnesse evermore,
Let never this gentillesse through your slouth
In hir kind trouth be aught forlore
That in women is, and hath ben full yore,
For in reverence of the Heavens queene,
We ought to worship all women that beene.

For of all creatures that ever wer get and borne,
This wote ye well a woman was the best,
By her was recovered the blisse that we had lorne,
And through the woman shall we come to rest,
And ben ysaved, if that our selfe lest,
Wherefore me thinketh, if that we had grace,
We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I rede, that to our lives end,
Fro this time forth, while that we have space,
That we have trespaced, pursue to amend,
Praying our ladie well of all grace
To bring us unto that blisful place,
There as she and all good women shal be in fere
In Heaven above, among the angels clere.



THE HOUSE OF FAME.

IN THIS BOOK IS SHEWED HOW THE DEEDS OF ALL MEN AND
WOMEN, BE THEY GOOD OR BAD, ARE CARRIED BY REPORT
TO POSTERITY.

GOD tourne us every dream to good,
For it is wonder thing by the rood
To my wit, what causeth swevens
On the morrow, or on evens,
And why the effect followeth of some,
And of some it shal never come,
Why that it is an avision,
And why this is a revelation,
Why this a dreame, why that a sweven,
And not to every man liche even,
Why this a fantome, why that oracles,
I n'ot: but whoso of these miracles
The causes know bet than I,
Define he, for I certainly
Ne can hem not, ne never thinke
To busie my wit for to swinke
To know of hir significations
The gendres, ne distinctions
Of the times of hem, ne the causes,
Or why this is more than that is,
Or yeve folkes complexions,
Make hem dreame of reflections,
Or else thus, as other saine,
For the great feeblenesse of hir brain,

By abstinence, or by sicknesse,
Prison, strife or great distresse,
Or els by disordinaunce,
Or natural accustomaunce,
That some men be too curious
In studie, or melancolious,
Or thus, so inly full of drede,
That no man may him bote rede,
Or els that devotion
Of some, and contemplation,
Causen such dreames oft,
Or that the cruell life unsoft
Of hem that loves leden,
Oft hopen much or dreden,
That purely hir impressions
Causen hem to have visions,
Or if spirits han the might
To make folke to dreame on night,
Or if the soule of proper kind,
Be so perfite as men find,
That it wote what is to come,
And that he warneth all and some
Of everiche of hir adventures,
By avisions, or by figures,
But that our flesh hath no might
To understand it aright,
For it is warned too derkely,
But why the cause is, not wote I,
Well worth of this thing clerkes,
That treaten of that, and of other werkes,
For I of none opinion
N'ill as now make mention,
But only that the holy rood
Tourne us every dreame to good,

For never sith I was borne,
Ne no man els me beforne,
Mette I trow stedfastly
So wonderfull a dreame as I.

The tenth day now of December,
The which, as I can remember,
I woll you tellen everydele,
But at my beginning trusteth wele,
I woll make invocation,
With a devout speciall devotion
Unto the god of sleepe anone,
That dwelleth in a cave of stone,
Upon a streame that commeth fro Lete,
That is a flood of Hell unswete,
Beside a fulke, that men clepe Cimerie,
There sleepeth aye this god unmerie,
With his slepie thousand sonnis,
That alway to sleepe hir wonne is
And to this god that I of rede,
Pray I, that he woll me spede,
My sweven for to tell aright,
If every dreame stand in his might,
And he that mover is of all
That is and was, and ever shall,
So give hem joy that it here,
Or all that they dreame to yere,
And for to stand all in grace
Of hir loves, or in what place
That hem were levest for to stonde,
And shield hem from povertie and shonde,
And from every unhappe and disease,
And send hem that may hem please,
That taketh well and scorneth nought,
Ne it misdeme in hir thought,

Through malicious entention,
And who so through presumption,
Or hate, or scorne, or through envie,
Dispite, or jape, or fellonie,
Misdeme it, pray I Jesus good,
Dreame he barefoot, or dreame he shood,
That every harme that any man
Hath had sith the world began,
Befall him thereof, or he sterve,
And graunt that he may it deserve.

Lo, with right such a conclusion,
As had of his avision
Cresus, that was king of Lide,
That high upon a gibbet dide,
This praier shall he have of me,
I am no bette in charite.

Now herken, as I have you saied,
What that I mette or I abraied,
Of December the tenth day,
Whan it was night, to slepe I lay,
Right as I was wont to doone,
And fell asleepe wonder soone,
As he that was weary forgo,
On pilgrimage miles two
To the corpes of saint Leonard,
To maken lithe, that erst was hard.

But as I slept, me mette I was
Within a temple ymade of glas,
In which there were no images
Of gold, standing in sundry stages,
In no rich tabernacles,
And with perrie no pinacles,
And no curious portraitures,

And queint manner of figures
Of gold worke, than I saw ever.

But certainly I n'ist never
Where that it was, but well wist I,
It was of Venus redely
This temple, for in portreiture,
I saw anon right her figure
Naked fleeting in a see,
And also on her head parde,
Her rose garland white and red,
And her combe to kembe her hed,
Her doves, and dan Cupido,
Her blind sonne, and Vulcano,
That in his face was full browne.

But as I romed up and downe,
I found that on the wall there was
Thus written on a table of bras.

“ I woll now sing if that I can,
The armes, and also the man,
That first came through his destinie
Fugitive fro Troy the countrie,
Into Itaile, with full much pine,
Unto the stronds of Lavine :”
And tho began the story anone,
As I shall tellen you echone.

First saw I the destruction
Of Troy, through the Greeke Sinon,
With his false untrue forswearings,
And with his chere and his lesings
Made a horse, brought into Troy,
By which Troyans lost all hir joy.

And after this was graved, alas,
How Ilions castle assailed was
And won, and king Priamus slaine,

And Polites his sonne certaine,
Dispitously of dan Pirrus.

And next that saw I how Venus
When that she saw her castle brend,
Downe from Heaven she gan discend,
And had her sonne Eneas to flee,
And how he fled, and how that he
Escaped was from all the prees,
And tooke his father, old Anchises,
And bare him on his backe away,
Crying "Alas and welaway,"
The which Anchises in his hand
Bare tho the gods of the land,
Thilke that unbrenned were.

Than saw I next all in fere,
How Crusa, dan Eneas wife,
Whom that he loved all his life,
And her yong sonne Iulo,
And eke Ascanius also,
Fledden eke with drerie chere,
That it was pitie for to here,
And in a forrest as they went,
At a tourning of a went,
How Crusa was ylost, alas,
That rede not I, how that it was,
How he her sought, and how her ghost
Bad him flie the Greekes host,
And said he must into Itaile,
As was his destinie, sauns faile,
That it was pitie for to heare,
Whan her spirit gan appeare
The words that she to him saied,
And for to keepe her sonne him praied
There saw I graven eke how he,

His father eke, and his meine,
With his ships gan to saile
Toward the countrey of Itaile,
As streight as they mighten go.

There saw I eke the cruell Juno,
That art dan Jupiters wife,
Thou hast yhated all thy life
All the Troyan blood,
Ren and cry as thou were wood
On Eolus, the god of winds,
To blowen out of all kinds
So loud, that he should drench
Lord, lady, groome, and wench
Of all the Troyans nation,
Without any of hir salvation.

There saw I such tempest arise,
That every herte might agrise,
To see it painted on the wall.

There saw I eke graven withall
Venus, how ye my lady dere,
Weeping with full wofull chere,
Praying Jupiter on hie
To save and keepe that navie
Of that Troyan Eneas,
Sith that he her sonne was.

There saw I Joves Venus kisse,
And graunted was of the tempest lisse.

There saw I how the tempest stent,
And how with all pine he went,
And prively tooke a rivage
Into the countrey of Carthage,
And on the morow how that he,
And a knight that height Achate,
Metten with Venus that day,

Going in a queint array,
As she had be an hunteresse,
With wind blowing upon her tresse,
And how Eneas began to plaine,
Whan he knew her, of his paine,
And how his ships dreint were,
Or els ylost, he n'ist where,
How she gan him comfort tho,
And bade him to Cartage go,
And there he should his folke find,
That in the sea were left behind,
And shortly of this thing to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, queene of that countre,
That shortly for to tellen, she
Became his love, and let him do
All that wedding longeth to,
What should I speake it more quaint,
Or paine me my words to paint,
To speake of love, it woll not be,
I cannot of that faculte,
And eke to tellen of the manere
How they first acquainted were,
It were a long processe to tell,
And over long for you to dwell.

There saw I grave, how Eneas
Told to Dido every caas,
That him was tidde upon the see.

And eft graven was how that she
Made of him shortly at a word,
Her life, her love, her lust, her lord,
And did to him all reverence,
And laid on him all the dispence,
That any woman might do,

Wening it had all be so,
As he her swore, and hereby demed
That he was good, for he such seemed.

Alas, what harme doth apparence,
Whan it is false in existence,
For he to her a traitour was,
Wherefore she slow her selfe alas.

Lo, how a woman doth amis,
To love him that unknowen is,
For by Christ lo thus it fareth,
It is not all gold that glareth,
For also brouke I well mine head,
There may be under goodlihead
Covered many a shreud vice,
Therefore be no wight so nice,
To take a love onely for chere,
Or speech, or for friendly manere,
For this shall every woman find,
That some man of his pure kind
Woll shewen outward the fairest,
Till he have caught that what him lest,
And than woll he causes find,
And swere how she is unkind,
Or false, or privie, or double was,
All this say I by Eneas
And Dido, and her nice lest,
That loved all to soone a guest,
Wherefore I woll say o proverbe,
That he that fully knoweth the herbe,
May safely it to his eie,
Withouten drede this is no lie.

But let us speake of Eneas,
How he betraied her, alas,
And left her full unkindly.

So whan she saw all utterly,
That he would her of trouth faile,
And wenden from her into Itaile,
She gan to wring her handes two.

“Alas” (quod she) “that me is wo,
Alas, is every man thus true,
That every yere woll have a new,
If it so long time endure,
Or els three paraventure,
And thus of one he woll have fame
In magnifying of his owne name,
Another for friendship sayeth he,
And yet there shall the third be,
That is taken for delite,
Lo, or els for singular profite :”
In such words gan complaine
Dido of her great paine,
As me mette dreaming readily,
None other authour alledge woll I.

“Alas” (quod she) “my sweet herte,
Have pitie on my sorrowes smart,
And slee me not, go not away.

“O wofull Dido, welaway”
(Quod she) unto her selfe tho.

“O Eneas what woll ye do,
O that your love ne your bond,
That ye swore with your right hond,
Ne my cruell death” (quod she)
“May hold you still here with me.

“O, have ye of my death no pite,
Ywis mine owne deare herte ye
Know full well that never yet,
As farre as ever I had wit,
Agilt you in thought ne in dede.

“O, have ye men such goodlihede
In speech, and never a dele of trouth,
Alas that ever had routh
Any woman on a false man.

“Now I see well, and tell can,
We wretched women can no art,
For certaine, for the more part,
Thus we been served everichone,
How sore that ye men can grone,
Anon as we have you received,
Certainly we been deceived,
For though your love last a season,
Wait upon the conclusion,
And eke how ye determine,
And for the more part define,
O welaway that I was borne,
For through you my name is lorne,
And mine actes redde and song
Over all this land in every tong.

“O wicked Fame, for there n’is
Nothing so swift lo as she is,
O sooth is, every thing is wist,
Though it be coverde with the mist,
Eke though I might duren ever,
That I have done recover I never,
That it ne shall be said, alas,
I shamed was through Encas,
And that I shall thus judged be :

“Lo right as she hath done, now she
Woll done eftsoones hardely,
Thus say the people prively :”
But that is done, n’is not to done,
But all her complaint ne her mone
Certaine availeth her not a stre,

And whan she wist soothly he
Was forth into his ship agone,
She into chamber went anone,
And called on her suster Anne,
And gan her to complaine than,
And said, that she cause was,
That she first loved him alas,
And first counsailed her thereto,
But what, whan this was said and do,
She rofte her selven to the herte,
And deide through the wounds smart,
But all the manner how she deide,
And all the words how she seide,
Who so to know it hath purpose,
Rede Virgile in Eneidos,
Or the Pistels of Ovide,
What that she wrote or that she dide,
And nere it too long to endite,
By God I would it here write,
But welaway, the harme and routh
That hath betide for such untrouth,
As men may oft in bookes rede,
And all day scene it yet in dede,
That for to thinken it tene is.

Lo Demophon, duke of Athenis,
How he forswore him falsely,
And traied Phillis wickedly,
That kings doughter was of Thrace,
And falsely gan his tearme pace,
And whan she wist that he was false,
She hong her selfe right by the halse,
For he had done her such untrouth,
Lo, was not this a wo and routh.
Eke looke how false and recheles

Was to Briseida Achilles,
And Paris to Oenone,
And Jason to Hipsiphile,
And eft Jason to Medea,
And Hercules to Dianira,
For he left her for Iolee,
That made him take his death parde.

How false was eke Theseus,
That as the storie telleth us,
How he betraied Adriane,
The devill be his soules bane,
For had he laughed or yloured,
He must have been all devoured,
If Adriane ne had be,
And for she had of him pite,
She made him fro the death escape,
And he made her a full false jape,
For after this within a while,
He left her sleeping in an isle,
Desart alone right in the see,
And stale away, and let her bee,
And tooke her suster Phedra tho
With him and gan to ship go,
And yet he had sworne to here,
On all that ever he could swere,
That so she saved him his life,
He would taken her to his wife,
For she desired nothing els,
In certaine, as the booke us tels.

But for to excuse this Eneas
Fulliche of all his great trespas,
The booke saith sauns faile,
The gods bad him go to Itaile,
And leaven Affrickes regioun,

And faire Dido and her toun,
Tho saw I grave how to Itaile
Dan Eneas gan for to saile,
And how the tempest all began,
And how he lost his steresman,
Which that the sterne, or he tooke keepe,
Smote over the bord as he sleepe.

And also saugh I how Sibile
And Eneas beside an isle,
To Hell went for to see
His father Anchises the free,
And how he there found Palinurus,
And also Dido, and Deiphebus,
And everiche tourment eke in Hell
Saw he, which long is for to tell,
Which paines who so list to know,
He must rede many a row
In Vergile or in Claudian,
Or Dante, that it tellen can.

Tho saw I eke all the arivaile
That Eneas had made in Itaile,
And with king Latin his treate,
And all the battailes that he
Was at himselfe, and his knights,
Or he had all ywonne his rights,
And how he Turnus reft his life,
And wan Lavinia to his wife,
And all the marvellous signals
Of the gods celestials,
How maugre Juno, Eneas
For all her sleight and her compas
Acheved all his aventure,
For Jupiter tooke on him cure,
At the prayer of Venus,

Which I pray alway save us,
And us aye of our sorrowes light.

Whan I had seene all this sight
In this noble temple thus,
“ Hey lord, thought I, that madest us,
Yet saw I never such noblesse
Of images, nor such richesse,
As I see graven in this church,
But nought wote I who did hem worch,
Ne where I am, ne in what countree,
But now will I out gone and see
Right at the wicket if I can
Seene ought where sterring any man,
That may me tellen where I am.”

Whan I out of the dore came,
I fast about me beheld,
Than saw I but a large field,
As farre as ever I might see,
Without toune, house, or tree,
Or bush, or grasse, or eared land,
For all the field was but of sand,
As small as men may see at eye
In the desart of Lybye,
Ne no manner creature,
That is yformed by nature,
Ne saw I, me to rede or wisse:
“ O Christ,” thought I, “ that are in blisse,
From fantome and illusion
Me save,” and with devotion
Mine eyen to the Heaven I cast,
Tho was I ware lo at the last,
That fast by the Samme on hye,
As kenne might I with mine eye,
Me thought I saw an egle sore,

But that it seemed much more
 Than I had any egle ysein,
 This is as sooth as death certain,
 It was of gold, and shone so bright,
 That never saw men such a sight,
 But if the Heaven had ywonne
 All new of God another sonne,
 So shone the egles fethers bright,
 And somewhat downward gan it light.

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS.



LIBER SECUNDUS.

Now hearken every manner man,
 That English understand can,
 And listeth of my dreame to here,
 For nowe at erst shall ye lere
 So sely and so dredefull a vision,
 That I say neither Scipion,
 Ne king Nabugodonosore,
 Pharao, Turnus, ne Alcanore,
 Ne metten such a dreame as this,
 Now faire blisfull, O Cipris,
 So be my favour at this time,
 That ye me t'endite and rime
 Helpeth, that in Pernaso dwell,
 Beside Elicon the clere well.

O thought, that wrote all that I met,
 And in the tresorie it set
 Of my braine, now shall men see
 If any vertue in thee bee,

To tell all my dreame aright,
Now kithe thy engine and thy might.

This egle of which I have you told,
That with feathers shone all of gold,
Which that so high gan to sore,
I gan behold more and more,
To seene her beauty and the wonder,
But never was that dent of thunder,
Ne that thing that men call soudre,
That smite sometime a toure to poudre,
And in his swift comming brend,
That so swithe gan downward discend,
As this foule whan it beheld,
That I a roume was in the field,
And with his grim pawes strong,
Within his sharpe nailes long,
Me fleyng at a swappe he hent,
And with his sours againe up went,
Me caryng in his clawes starke,
As lightly as I had ben a larke,
How high, I cannot tellen you,
For I came up, I n'ist never how,
For so astonied and asweved
Was every vertue in my heved,
What with his sours and my dread,
That all my feeling gan to dead,
For why it was a great affray.

Thus I long in his clawes lay,
Till at the last he to me spake
In mans voice, and said "Awake,
And be not agast so for shame,"
And called me tho by my name,
And for I should better abraid,
Me to awake, thus he said,

Right in the same voice and stevin,
That useth one that I can nevin,
And with that voice, sooth to saine,
My mind came to me again,
For it was goodly said to me,
So nas it never wont to be,
And herewithal I gan to sterc,
As he me in his feet bere,
Till that he felt that I had heat,
And felt eke tho mine herte beat,
And tho gan he me to disport,
And with gentle wordes me comfort,
And said twice, " Saint Mary,
Thou art a noyous thing to cary,
And nothing needeth it parde,
For also wise God helpe me,
As thou no harme shalt have of this,
And this case that betiddeth thee is,
Is for thy lore and for thy prow,
Let see, darst thou looke yet now,
Be full ensured boldely,

" I am thy friend," and therewith I
Gan for to wonder in my mind.

" O God," quod I, " that madest all kind,
Shall I none otherwise die,
Whether Jove will me stellifie,
Or what thing may this signifie,
I am neither Enocke, ne Helie,
Ne Romulus, ne Ganimede,
That were bore up as men rede,
To Heaven with dan Jupiter,
And made the gods boteler :"
Lo, this was tho my fantasie,
But he that bare gan asprie,

That I so thought and said this,
“Thou deemest of thy selfe amis,
For Jove is not thereabout,
I dare thee put full out of doubt
To make of the yet a sterre,
But ere I beare thee much ferre,
I will the tell what I am,
And whider thou shalt, and why I came,
To do this, so that thou take
Good herte, and not for feare quake.”
“Gladly,” quod I, “Now well,” quod he :
“First, I that in my feet have the,
Of whom thou hast feare and wonder,
I am dwelling with the god of thonder,
Which men callen Jupiter,
That doth me flien full oft fer
To do all his commaundement,
And for this cause he hath me sent
To thee: herke now by thy trouth,
Certaine he hath of thee routh,
That thou hast so truely
Long served ententifely
His blind nevew Cupido,
And faire Venus also,
Without guerdon ever yet,
And nathelesse hast set thy wit,
Although in thy head full little is,
To make bookes, songs, and dities
In rime, or else in cadence,
As thou best canst in reverence
Of Love, and of his servaunts eke,
That have his service sought and seke,
And painest thee to praise his art,
Although thou haddest never part,

Wherefore also God me blesse,
Jovis halt it great humblesse,
And vertue eke, that thou wilt make
A night full oft thine head to ake,
In thy study so thou writest,
And evermore of Love enditest,
In honour of him and praisings,
And in his folkes furtherings,
And in hir matter all devisest,
And not him ne his folke dispisest,
Although thou maist go in the daunce
Of hem, that him list not avaunce,
Wherefore as I said ywis,
Jupiter considreth well this,
And also beausire, of other things,
That is, thou haste no tidings
Of Loves folke, if they be glade,
Ne of nothing else that God made,
And not onely fro ferre countree,
That no tidings comen to thee,
Not of thy very neighbours,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou hearest neither that ne this,
For whan thy labour all done is,
And hast made all thy rekenings
In stead of rest and of new things,
Thou goest home to thine house anone,
And also dombe as a stone,
Thou sittest at another booke,
Till fully dased is thy looke,
And livest thus as an hermite,
Although thine abstinence is lite,
And therfore Jovis through his grace
Will that I beare thee to a place,

Which that hight the House of Fame,
And to do the sport and game
In some recompensation
Of thy labour and devotion
That thou hast had, lo causelesse,
To god Cupido the rechelesse,
And thus this god through his merite
Will with some manner thing thee quite,
So that thou wilt be of good chere,
For trust well that thou shalt here,
When we ben commen there as I say,
Mo wonder things dare I lay,
And of Loves folke mo tidings,
But soothsawes and lesings,
And mo loves new begon,
And long served till love is won,
And mo lovers casuelly,
That ben betide, no man wote why,
But as a blind man starteth an hare,
And more jolite and welfare,
While they find love of stele,
As thinke men, and over all wele,
Mo discords, and mo jealousies,
Mo murmures, and mo novelries,
And also mo dissimulations,
And eke fained reparations,
And mo berdes in two hours
Without rasour or sisours
Ymade, than graines be of sands,
And eke mo holding in mo hands,
And also mo ronovelaunces
Of old forleten aqueintaunces,
Mo love-daies, and mo accords
Than on instruments ben cords,

And eke of love mo exchaunges,
Than ever corne were in graunges,
Unneth maiest thou trowen this,"
Quod he, " No so helpe me God as wis"
Quod I, " Now why," quod he, " For it
Were impossible to my wit,
Though Fame had all the pries
In all a realme and all aspies,
How that yet he should heare all this,
Or they espien :"—" O yes, yes,"
Quod he, to me, " that can I preve
By reason, worthy for to leve,
So that thou give thine advertence
To understand my sentence.

" First shalt thou here where she dwelleth,
Right so as thine owne booke telleth,
Her palais standeth as I shall say
Right even amidde of the way
Betweene Heaven, Earth, and see,
That whatsoever in all these three
Is spoken in prive or apert,
The way thereto is so overt,
And stant eke in so just a place,
That every sowne mote to it pace,
Or what so commeth from any tong,
Be rowned, red, or song,
Or spoken in suertie or drede,
Certaine it mote thider nede.

" Now hearken well, for why I will
Tellen thee a proper skill,
And a worthy demonstration
In mine imagination.

" Geffray, thou wotest well this,
That every kindly thing that is,

Hath a kindly stede there he
May best in it conserved be,
Unto which place every thing,
Through his kindly enclining,
Meveth for to come to,
Whan that it is away therefro,
As thus, lo how thou maist al day see,
Take any thing that heavie bee,
As stone or lead, or thing of weight,
And beare it never so hie on height,
Let go thine hand, it falleth downe,
Right so say I by fire or sowne
Or smoke, or other things light,
Alway they seeke upward on height,
Light things up, and downward charge,
While everich of hem be at large,
And for this cause thou maist well see,
That every river unto the see
Enclined is to go by kind,
And by these skilles, as I find,
Have fishes dwelling in flood and see,
And trees eke on the earth be,
Thus every thing by his reason
Hath his own proper mansion,
To which he seeketh to repaire,
There as it should nat appaire.

“ Lo, this sentence is knowne couth
Of every philosophers mouth,
As Aristotle and dan Platone,
And other clerkes many one,
And to confirme my reasoun,
Thou wost well that speech is soun,
Or else no man might it here,
Now herke what I woll thee lere.

“Sowne is not but eyre ybroken,
And every speech that is spoken,
Loud or prive, foule or faire,
In his substaunce is but eyre,
For as flame is but lighted smoke,
Right so is sowne eyre ybroke,
But this may be in many wise,
Of which I will thee devise,
As sowne commeth of pipe or harpe,
For when a pipe is blowen sharpe,
The eyre is twist with violence,
And rent: lo, this is my sentence
Eke, whan men harpe strings smite,
Wheder it be much or lite,
Lo, with the stroke the eyre it breketh,
And right so breaketh it whan men speketh,
Thus wost thou well what thing is speach,
Now henceforth I will thee teach,
How everich speech, voice, or soun,
Through his multiplicatioun,
Though it were piped of a mouse,
Mote needs come to Fames House,
I prove it thus, take heed now
By experience, for if that thou
Threw in a water now a stone,
Well wost thou it will make anone
A little roundell as a cercle,
Paraventure as broad as a covercle,
And right anone thou shalt see wele,
That whele cercle wil cause another whele,
And that the third, and so forth brother,
Every cercle causing other,
Broader than himselfe was,
And thus from roundell to compas,

Ech about other going,
Causeth of others stering,
And multiplying evermo,
Till it be so farre go
That it at both brinkes bee,
Although thou may it not see
Above, yet gothe it alway under,
Though thou thinke it a great wonder,
And who so saith of trouth I vary,
Bid him prove the contrary,
And right thus every word ywis,
That loud or privie yspoken is,
Moveth first an eyre about,
And of his moving out of dout
Another eyre anone is moved,
As I have of the water proved,
That every cercle causeth other,
Right so of eyre my leve brother,
Everich eyre in other stereth
More and more, and speech up beareth,
Or voice or noise, word or soun,
Aye through multiplication,
Till it be at the House of Fame,
Take it in earnest or in game,
Now have I told, if thou have mind,
How speech or sowne, of pure kind
Enclined is upward to meve,
This maiest thou fele well by preve,
And that same stede ywis,
That every thing enclined to is,
Hath his kindliche stede,
That sheweth it without drede,
That kindly the mansioun
Of everich specche of every soun,

Be it either foule or faire,
Hath his kind place in aire,
And sith that every thing ywis
Out of his kind place ywis,
Moveth thider for to go,
If it away be therefro,
As I have before proved thee,
It sheweth every soun parde,
Moveth kindely to pace,
As up into his kind place,
And this place of which I tell,
There as Fame list to dwell,
Is sette amidde of these three,
Heaven, Earth, and eke the see,
As most conservatife the soun,
Than is this the conclusion,
That every speech of every man,
As I thee tell first began,
Moveth up on height to pace
Kindly to Fames place.

“ Tell me this now faithfully,
Have I not proved thus simply,
Without any subtelte
Of speech, or great prolixite,
Of termes of philosophy,
Of figures of poetry,
Or colours of rhetorike,
Perde it ought thee to like,
For hard language, and hard matere
Is incombrous for to here
At ones, wost thou not well this?”
And I answered and said “ Yes.”

“ Ah ah,” quod he, “ lo so I can,
Leudly unto a leud man

Speke, and shew him such skilles,
That he may shake hem by the billes,
So palpable they shoulde be,
But tel me this now pray I thee,
How thinketh thee my conclusioun?"

"A good persuasion,"

Quod I, "it is, and lyke to be,
Right so as thou hast proved me,"
"By God," quod he, "and as I leve,
Thou shalt have it or it be eve,
Of every word of this sentence,
A profe by experience,
And with thine eares hearken well,
Toppe and taile, and everidell,
That every word that spoken is,
Commeth into Fames House ywis,
As I have said, what wilt thou more,"
And with this word upper to sore,
He began and said "By saint Jame,
Now will we speake all of game.

"How farest thou now," quod he, to me,
"Well," quod I, "Now see," quod he,
By thy trouth yond adowne,
Where that thou knowest any towne,
Or house, or any other thing,
And whan thou hast of ought knowing,
Looke that thou warne me,
And I anon shall tell thee,
How farre that thou art now therefro."

And I adowne gan to loken tho,
And beheld fields and plaines,
Now hils, and now mountaines,
Now valeis, and now forests,
And now unneth great beests,

Now rivers, now citees,
Now townes, now great trees,
Now shippes sayling in the see.

But thus soone in a while hec,
Was flowen fro the ground so hye,
That all the world as to mine eye,
No more seemed than a pricke,
Or else was the eyre so thicke
That I might it not discerne :
With that he spake to me so yerne,
And said : “ Seest thou any token,
Or ought that in this world of spoken ? ”

I said “ Nay, ” — “ No wonder is, ”
Quod he, “ for never halfe so hye as this,
N’as Alexander of Macedon
King, ne of Rome dan Scipion,
That saw in dreame at point devise,
Heaven and Earth, Hell and Paradise,
Ne eke the wretch Dedalus,
Ne his childe nice Icharus,
That flewe so hie, that the hete
His wyngs molte, and he fell wete
In midde the sea, and there he dreint,
For whom was made a great complaint.

“ Now tourne upward, ” quod he, “ thy face,
And behold this large place,
This eyre, but looke that thou ne bee
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see,
For in this regioun certayne,
Dwelleth many a citezeine,
Of which speaketh dan Plato,
These ben the eyrishe beests lo, ”
And tho sawe I all the menie,
Both gone and also fle.

“ Lo,” quod he, “ cast up thyne eye,
See yonder lo, the galaxie,
The which men clepe the milky way,
For it is white : and some parfay
Callen it Watling streete,
That ones was brent with the hete,
When the Sunnes sonne the rede,
That hight Pheton, would lede
Algate his fathers cart, and gie.

“ The cart horse gan well aspice,
That he coud no governaunce.
And gan for to leape and prauunce,
And beare him up, and now down,
Till he saw the Scorpioun,
Which that in Heaven a signe is yet,
And he for fere lost his wit
Of that, and let the reynes gone
Of his horse, and they anone
Soone up to mount, and downe discende,
Till bothe eyre and Earth brende,
Till Jupiter lo, at the last
Him slew, and fro the carte cast.

“ Lo, is it not a great mischaunce,
To let a foole have governaunce
Of things that he can not demaine ?”

And with this word sothe for to saine
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me than more and more,
So faithfully to me spake he.

Tho gan I to looke under me,
And beheld the eyrish beests,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempests,
Snowes, hayles, raynes, and windes,
And than gendring in hir kindes,

All the way through which I came ;
“ O God,” quod I, “ that made Adame,
Moch is thy might and nobles.”

And tho thought I upon Boece,
That writeth a thought may fleie so hie,
With fethers of philosophy
To passen everich element,
And when he hath so far ywent,
Than may be seen behind his backe,
Cloude, and earth, and all that I of spake.

Tho gan I wexe in a were,
And said, “ I wote well I am here,
But whether in body or in goost,
I n’ot ywis, but God thou woost,”
For more clere entendement,
N’as me never yet ysent,
And than thought I on Marcian,
And eke of Anticlaudian,
That sothe was hir descripcion
Of all the Heavens region,
As far as that I saw the preve,
And therefore I can hem leve.

With that the egle gan to crie,
“ Let be,” quod he, “ thy fantasie,
Wilt thou learne of sterres ought ? ”

“ Nay certainly,” quod I, “ right nought.”
“ And why,” quod he ? “ For I am old : ”
“ Or els would I thee have told,”
Quod he, “ the sterres names lo,
And all the Heavens signs to,
And which they be.”—“ No force,” quod I.

“ Yes parde,” quod he, “ wost thou why,
For whan thou redest poetry,
How the goddes can stellify

Birde, fishe, or him, or her,
As the ravin and other,
Or Ariones harpe fine,
Castor, Polexe, or Delphine,
Or Athalantes doughters seven,
How all these are set in Heven,
For though thou have hem ofte in hand,
Yet n'ost thou nat where they stand."

"No force," quod I, "it is no need,
As well I leve so God me speed,
Hem that writen of this matere,
As though I knew hir places here,
And eke they semen here so bright,
It should shenden all my sight,
To looke on hem :"—"That may well be,"
Quod he, and so forth bare he me
A while, and tho he gan to cry,
(That never herde I thing so hie)
"Hold up thine heed, for all is well,
Saint Julian lo, bonne hostell,
See here the House of Fame lo,
Mayst thou not here that I do?"

"What?" quod I, "The great sowne"
Quod he, "that rombleth up and downe
In Fames House full of tidings,
Both of fayre speech and chidings,
And of false and sothe compounded,
Herken well it is not rowned.

"Herest thou not the great swough?"
"Yes perde," quod I, "wel ynough,"
And what sowne is it like," quod he?

"Peter, lyke the beating of the see,"
Quod I, "against the roches holow,
Whan tempests done her shippes swolow,

And that a man stand out of doute,
A myle thens, and here it route.

“Or els lyke the humbling
After the clappe of a thundring,
When Jovis hath the eyre ybete,
But it doth me for feare swete.”

“Nay, drede thee not thereof,” quod he,
It is nothing that will biten thee,
Thou shalt have no harme truely.”

And with that worde both he and I
As nigh the place arrived were,
As men might cast with a spere,
I n’ist how, but in a strete
He set me faire on my feete,
And said, “Walke forth a pace
And tell thine adventure and case,
That thou shalt finde in Fames place.”

“Now,” quod I, “while we have space
To speake, or that I go fro thee,
For the love of God tell me,
In sothe, that I will of thee lere,
If this noyse that I here
Be as I have herde thee tell,
Of folke that done in earth dwell,
And commeth here in the same wise,
As I thee herd or this devise,
And that here lives body n’is
In all that house that yonder is,
That maketh all this loude fare.”

“No,” quod he, “by saint Clare,
And also wisse God rede me,
But o thing I will warne thee,
Of the which thou wilt have wonder.

“Lo, to the House of Fame yonder,

Thou woste how commeth every speach,
It needeth not the este to teach,
But understand now right well this,
When any speach ycomen is,
Up to the palais anone right,
It wexeth like the same wight,
Which that the worde in earth spake,
Be he clothed in reed or blake,
And hath so very his likenesse,
And spake the worde that thou wilt gesse,
That it the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.

“And is not this a wonder thing,”
“Yes,” quod I tho, “by Heaven king,”
And with this worde “farewell,” quod he,
“And here will I abide thee,
And God of Heaven send thee grace,
Some good to learne in this place,”
And I of him tooke leave anone,
And gan forth to the palais gone.

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS.



LIBER TERTIUS.

God of science and of light,
Apollo through thy great might,
This littell last booke now thou gie,
Now that I will for maistrie,
Here art potenciall be shewde,
But for the rime is light and lewde,

Yet make it somewhat agreccable,
Though some verse fayle in a sillable,
And that I do no diligence,
To shewe crafte, but sentence,
And if devine vertue thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now,
That in my heed ymarked is,
Lo, that is for to meanen this,
The House of Fame for to discrive,
Thou shalt see me go as blive
Unto the next laurer I see,
And kisse it, for it is thy tree,
Now entre in my brest anone.

When I was from the Egle gone,
I gan behold upon this place,
And certaine or I further passe,
I woll you all the shape devise,
Of house and citce, and all the wise,
How I gan to this place approche,
That stood upon so hie a roche,
Hier standeth none in Spaine,
But up I clambe with moch paync,
And though to climbe greved mee,
Yet I ententife was to see,
And for to poren wondre low,
If I coude any wise yknow
What maner stone this roche was,
For it was like a limed glas,
But that it shone full more clere,
But of what congeled matere
It was, I n'iste redely,
But at the last espied I,
And found that it was everydele,
A roche of yse and not of stele,

Thought I “ By saint Thomas of Kent,
This were a feeble foundement,
To builden on a place hie,
He ought him little to glorifie,
That hereon bilte, God so me save.”

Tho sawe I all the hall ygrave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had been in moch wele,
And hir fames wide yblow,
But well unneth might I know
Any letters for to rede
Hir names by, for out of drede,
They weren almost of thawed so,
That of the letters one or two
Were molte away of every name,
So unfamous was wexe her fame,
But men say, what may ever last.

Tho gan I in mine herte cast,
That they were molte away for heate,
And not away with stormes beate,
For on that other side I sey,
Of this hill, that northward ley,
How it was written full of names,
Of folke that had afore great fames,
Of old time, and yet they were
As fresh as men had written hem there
The self-day, or that houre
That I on hem gan to poure,
But well I wiste what it made,
It was conserved with the shade,
All the writing that I sie,
Of a castell that so stoode on hie,
And stoode eke in so cold a place,
That heate might it not deface,

Tho gan I on this hill to gone,
And found on the coppe a wone,
That all the men that been on live,
Ne han the conning to discrive
The Beaute of that ilke place,
Ne coud caste no compace,
Soch another for to make,
That might of beauty be his make,
Ne so wonderly ywrought,
That it astonieth yet my thought,
And maketh all my witte to swinke
On this castell for to thinke,
So that the great beautie,
The caste, crafte, and curiositie,
Ne can I not to you devise,
My witte ne may me not suffise,
But nathelesse all the substaunce
I have yet in my remembraunce,
For why me thought by saint Gile,
All was of stone of berile,
Both the castell and the toure,
And eke the hall, and every bourc,
Without peeces or joynings,
But many subtell compassings,
As babeuries and pinnacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw, and full eke of windowes,
As flakes fallen in great snowes,
And eke in each of the pinnacles
Weren sundry habitacles,
In which stooden all withouten,
Full the castle all abouten,
Of all manner of minstrales,
And jestours, that tellen tales

Both of weeping and of game,
And of all that longeth unto Fame,
There heard I play on an harpe,
That souned both well and sharpe,
Him Orpheus full craftely,
And on this side fast by
Sat the harper Orion,
And Gacides Chirion,
And other harpers many one,
And the Briton Glaskirion,
And smale harpers with hir gleees,
Sate under hem in divers sees,
And gone on hem upward to gape,
And counterfeited hem as an ape,
Or as craft counterfeit kind.

Tho saw I standen hem behind,
A farre from hem, all by hemselfe,
Many a thousand times twelve,
That made loud minstralcies
In cornemuse and shalmies,
And many another pipe,
That craftely began to pipe,
Both in douced and in rede,
That ben at feasts with the brode,
And many a floyte and litling horne,
And pipes made of greene corne,
As have these little heerd gromes,
That keepen beastes in the bromes.

There saw I than dan Citherus,
And of Athenes dan Proserus,
And Mercia that lost her skinne,
Both in face, body, and chinne,
For that she would envien lo,
To pipen bette than Apollo.

There saw I eke famous old and yong,
Pipers of all the Dutch tong,
To learne love daunces, springs,
Reyes, and the straunge things.

Tho saw I in another place,
Standing in a large space
Of hem that maken bloody soun,
In trumpe beme, and clarioun,
For in fight and bloodsheddings
Is used gladly clarionings.

There heard I trumpe, Messenus,
Of whom that speaketh Vergilius.

There heard I Joab trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo,
And all that used clarion,
In Casteloigne and Aragon,
That in hir times famous were,
To learnen saw I trumphen there.

There saw I sit in other sees,
Playing upon other sundry gleees,
Which that I cannot neven,
Mo than sterres ben in Heven,
Of which I n'ill as now not rime,
For ease of you, and losse of time :
For time ylost, this know ye,
By no way may recovered be.

There saw I playing jogelours,
Magiciens, and tragetours,
And phetonisses, charmeresses,
Old witches, sorceresses,
That usen exorsisations,
And eke subfumigations,
And clerkes eke, which conne well
All this magike naturell,

That craftely doe hir entents,
To maken in certaine ascendents,
Images lo, through which magike,
To maken a man ben hole or sike.

There saw I the queene Medea,
And Circes eke, and Calipsea.

There saw I Hermes Ballenus,
Limote, and eke Simon Magus.

There saw I, and knew by name,
That by such art done men have fame.

There saw I Coll Tragetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Play an uncouth thing to tell,
I saw him carry a wind-mell
Under a walnote shale.

What should I make lenger tale,
Of all the people that I sey,
I could not tell till domisdey.

Whan I had all this folke behold,
And found me loose and not hold,
And I amused a long while
Upon this wall of berile,
That shone lighter than a glas,
And made well more than it was,
As kinde thing of fame is,
And than anone after this,
I gan forth romen till I fonde
The castell yate on my right honde,
Which so well corven was,
That never such another n'as,
And yet it was by aventure
Ywrought by great and subtil cure ;
It needeth not you more to tellen,
To make you too long dwellen,

Of these yates florishings,
Ne of compaces, ne of karvings,
Ne how the hacking in masonries,
As corbettes, and imageries.

But Lord so faire it was to shewe,
For it was all with gold behewe,
But in I went, and that anone
There met I crying many one,
“ A larges a larges, hold up well
God save the lady of this pell,
Our owne gentill lady Fame,
And hem that willen to have a name
Of us,” thus heard I crien all,
And fast comen out of the hall,
And shoke nobles and starlings,
And crowned were as kings,
With crownes wrought full of losinges,
And many ribans, and many fringes
Were on hir clothes truely.

Tho at the last espied I
That persevauntes and heraudes,
That crien riche folkes laudes,
It weren, all and every man
Of hem, as I you tell can
Had on him throwe a vesture,
Which men clepe a coate armure,
Embroudred wonderly riche,
As though they were not yliche,
But nought will I, so mote I thrive.
Be about to discrive
All these armes that there weren,
That they thus on hir coates weren,
For to me were impossible,
Men might make of hem a bible,

Twenty foote thicke as I trowe,
For certain who so coud know,
Might there all the armes seen,
Of famous folke that had been
In Affrike, Europe, and Asie,
Sith first began chevalrie.

Lo, how should I now tell all this,
Ne of the hall eke what need is,
To tellen you that every wall
Of it, and rofe and flore with all,
Was plated halfe a foote thicke
Of golde, and that n'as not wicke,
But for to prove in all wise,
As fine as ducket in Venise,
Of which to lite all in my pouche is,
And they were set as thicke of ouches
Fine, of the finest stones faire,
That men reden in the lapidaire,
Or as grasses growen in a mede,
But it were all to long to rede
The names, and therefore I pace,
But in this lustie and riche place,
That Fames hall called was,
Full moch prees of folke there n'as,
Ne crouding, for to moch prees,
But all on hie above a dees,
Satte in a see imperiall,
That made was of rubie royall,
Which that a carbuncle is ycalled,
I sawe perpetually ystalled,
A feminine creature,
That never formed by nature
Was such another thing I saie :
For alderfirst, soth to saie,

Me thought that she was so lite,
That the length of a cubite,
Was lenger than she seemed be,
But thus soone in a while she,
Her self tho wonderly streight,
That with her feet she th'erthe reight,
And with her hedde she touched Heaven,
There as shineth the sterres seven,
And thereto yet, as to my wit,
I saw a great wonder yet,
Upon her eyen to behold,
But certainly I hem never told,
For as fele eyen had she,
As fethers upon foules be,
Or weren on the beasts foure,
That Goddes trone can honour,
As writeth John in the Apocalips,
Her heer that was oundie and crips,
As burned gold it shone to see.

And sothe to tellen also shee,
Had also fele up standing cares,
And tonges, as on beast been heares,
And on her fcete woxen saw I,
Partriche winges redily.

But Lord the perrie and the richesse,
I saw sitting on the goddesse,
And the heavenly melodie,
Of songes full of armonie,
I heard about her trone ysong,
That all the palais wall rong,
So song the mighty Muse she,
That cleped is Caliope,
And her seven sisterne eke,
That in hir faces seemen meke,

And evermore eternally,
They song of Fame tho heard I,
“Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddess of renown and of Fame.”

Tho was I ware at the last,
As I mine eyen gan up cast,
That this ilke noble queene,
On her shoulders gan sustene
Both the armes and the name
Of tho that had large fame,
Alisander, and Hercules,
That with a sherte his life did lese,
And thus found I sitting this goddessse,
In noble honour and richesse,
Of which I stinte a while now,
Other thing to tellen you.

Tho saw I stande on thother side,
Streight doune to the doores wide,
From the deis many a pillere
Of metall, that shone not full clere,
But though ther were of no richesse,
Yet were they made for great noblesse,
And in hem great sentence,
And folke of hie and digne reverence,
Of which to tell will I fonde.

Upon a piller sawe I stonde,
Alderfirst there I sie,
Upon a piller stonde on hie,
That was of lede and of iron fine,
Him of the secte Saturnine,
The Ebraike Josephus the old,
That of Jewes gestes told,
And he bare on his shulders hie,
The fame up of the Jewrie,

And by him stoden other seven,
Wise and worthy for to neven,
To helpen him beare up the charge,
It was so heavy and so large,
And for they written of battailes,
As well as of other marvayles,
Therefore was lo, this pillere,
Of which I you tell here,
Of leade and iron both ywis,
For iron Martes metall is,
Which that god is of battaile,
And the leade withouten faile,
Is lo, the metall of Saturne,
That hath full large whele to turne,
To stand forth on either rowe
Of hem, which I could knowe,
Though I by order hem not tell,
To make you to long to dwell.

These, of which I gan rede,
There saw I stand out of drede,
Upon an iron piller strong,
That painted was all endlong,
With tiges blood in every place,
The Tholason that height Stace,
That bare of Thebes up the name,
Upon his shoulders, and the fame
Also of cruell Achilles,
And by him stode withouten lecs,
Full wonder hie upon a piller
Of iron, he the great Omer,
And with him Dares and Titus
Before, and eke he Lollius,
And Guido eke the Colempnis,
And English Galfride eke ywis,

And ech of these as I have joy,
Was busie to beare up Troy,
So heavy thereof was the fame,
That for to beare it was no game,
But yet I gan full well espie,
Betwene hem was a little envie,
One said that Omer made lies,
Feyning in his poetries,
And was to the Greekes favourable,
Therefore held he it but fable.

Tho saw I stand on a pillere,
That was of tinned iron clere,
The Latine poete Virgile,
That hath bore up a long while
The fame of pius Eneas.

And next him on a pillar was,
Of copper, Venus' clerke, Ovide,
That hath sown wondrous wide
The great god of loves fame,
And there he bare up well his name,
Upon this pillar also hie,
As I might see it with mine eye :
For why this hall whereof I rede,
Was woxe on height, length, and brede,
Well more by a thousand deale,
Than it was erst, that saw I weale.

Tho saw I on a pillar by,
Of iron wrought full sternely,
The great poet dan Lucan,
That on his shoulders bare up than,
As hie as that I might see,
The fame of Julius, and Pompee,
And by him stoden all these clerkes,
That write of Romes mighty werkes,

That if I would hir names tell,
All to long must I dwell.

And next him on a piller stood,
Of sulphure, liche as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, sothe for to tell,
That bare up all the fame of Hell,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpine,
That queene is of the derke pine,
What should I more tell of this,
The hall was all full ywis,
Of hem that written old jestes,
As been on trees rokes nestes,
But it a full confuse mattere
Were all these jestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they hight.
But while that I beheld this sight,
I herde a noise approchen blive,
That fareth as bees done in an hive,
Ayenst her time of out flying,
Right soch a maner murmuring,
For all the world it seemed mee.

Tho gan I looke about and see,
That there come entring into the hall,
A right great company withall,
And that of sondry regions,
Of all kind of condicions,
That dwell in yearth under the Moone,
Poore and riche ; and all so soone
As they were come into the hall,
They gan on knees doune to fall,
Before this ilke noble queene,
“ And said, Graunt us lady sheene,
Eche of us of thy grace a bone,”
And some of hem she graunted sone,

And some she warned well and faire,
And some she graunted the contraire
Of hir asking utterly :

But this I say you truely,
What her grace was, I'nist,
For of these folke full well I wist,
They had good fame eche deserved,
Although they were diversly served,
Right as her sister dame Fortune
Is wont to serve in commune.

Now herken how she gan to pay
Hem that gan her of grace pray,
And yet lo, all this companie
Saiden soth, and not a lie.

“Madame,” sayd they, “we bee
Folke that here besechen thee,
That thou graunt us now good fame,
And let our workes have good name,
In full recompensacioun
Of good worke, give us good renoun.”

“I warne it you” (quod she) “anone,
Ye get of me good fame none,
By God, and therefore go your way.”

“Alas” (quod they) “and welaway,
Tell us what your cause may be.”

“For me list it not” (quod she)
“No wight shall speake of you ywis,
Good ne harme, ne that ne this.”

And with that worde she gan to call
Her messenger that was in hall,
And bad that he should faste gone,
Upon paine to be blind anone,
For Eolus the god of winde,
In Trace there ye shall him finde,

And bid him bring his clarioun,
That is full divers of his soun,
And it is cleped cleare laude,
With which he wont is to heraude
Hem that me list ypraised bee :
And also bid him how that hee
Bring eke his other clarioun,
That height sclander in every toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
Hem that me list, and doe hem shame.

This messenger gan fast to gone,
And found where in a cave of stone,
In a countree that height Trace,
This Eolus with harde grace,
Helde the windes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as the beres rore,
He bound and pressed hem so sore.

This messenger gan fast crie,
“ Rise up” (quod he) “ and fast thee hie,
Till thou at my lady bee,
And take thy clarions eke with thee,
And speed thee fast :” and he anone,
Tooke to one that hight Tritone,
His clarions to bearen tho,
And let a certaine winde go,
That blewe so hidously and hie,
That it ne left not a skie
In all the welken long and brode.

This Eolus no where abode,
Till he was come to Fames feete,
And eke the man that Triton heete,
And there he stode as still as stone,
And herewithall there came anone

Another huge companie
Of good folke and gan to crie,
“Lady graunt us now good fame
And let our workes have that name,
Now in honour of gentillesse,
And also God your soule blesse,
For we han well deserved it,
Therefore is right that we be quit.”

“As thrive I” (quod she) “ye shall faile,
Good workes shall you not availe,
To have of me good fame as now,
But wote ye what, I graunt you,
That ye shall have a shrewd name,
And wicked loos and worse fame,
Though ye good loos have well deserved,
Now goeth your way for you been served :
And thou dan Eolus” (quod she)
“Take forth thy trumpe anone let see,
That is yeleped sclaunder light,
And blow hir loos, that every wight
Speake of hem harne and shreudnesse,
In stede of good and worthinesse,
For thou shalt trumpe all the contrarie,
Of that they have done well and faire.”

Alas thought I, what adventures
Have these sory creatures,
That they among all the pres,
Should thus be shamed giltles?
But what, it must needes be.
What did this Eolus, but he
Tooke out his blacke trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the Devill was,
And gan this trompe for to blow,
As all the world should overthrow,

Throughout every regioun,
Went this foule trumpes soun,
As swifte as a pellet out of a gonne,
When fire is in the poudre ronne,
And soch a smoke gan out wende,
Out of the foule trumpes ende,
Blacke, blue, grenishe, swartish, red,
As doth where that men melte led,
Lo, all on hie from the tewell,
And thereto one thing saw I well,
That the ferther that it ranne,
The greater wexen it beganne,
As doth the river from a well,
And it stanke as the pitte of Hell,
Alas, thus was hir shame yrong,
And giltlesse on every tong.

Tho came the third companie,
And gone up to the dees to hie,
And doune on knees they fell anone,
And saiden, "We been everichone
Folke that han full truely
Deserved fame rightfully,
And prayed you it might be know,
Right as it is and forth blow."

"I graunt" (quod she) "for now me list
That your good workes shall be wist,
And yet ye shall have better loos,
Right in dispite of all your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anone :
Let now" (quod she) "thy trumpe gone,
Thou Eolus that is so blacke,
And out thine other trumpe take
That hight laude, and blow it so
That through the world hir fame go,

All easely and not too fast,
That it be knowen at the last."

"Full gladly lady mine" he saied,
And out his trumpe of gold he braied
Anone, and set it to his mouth,
And blewe it east, west, and south,
And north, as loude as any thonder,
That every wight hath of it wonder,
So brode it ran or that it stent,
And certes all the breath that went
Out of his trumpes mouth smelde,
As men a potte full of baume helde
Among a basket full of roses,
This favour did he to hir loses.

And right with this I gan espie,
There came the fowerth companie,
But certaine they were wonder fewe,
And gonne to standen on a rewe,
And saiden, "Certes lady bright,
We have done well with all our might,
But we ne keepe to have fame,
Hide our workes and our name,
For Goddes love, for certes wee
Have surely done it for bountee,
And for no manner other thing."

"I graunt you all your asking,"
(Quod she) "let your workes be dedde."

With that about I tourned my hedde,
And sawe anone the fifth rout
That to this lady gan lout,
And doune on knees anone to fall,
And to her tho besoughten all,
To hiden hir good workes eke,
And said, they yeve not a leke,

For no fame, ne soch renoun,
For they for contemplacioun,
And Goddes love had it wrought,
Ne of fame would they nought.

“What” (quod she) “and be ye wood,
And wene ye for to do good,
And for to have of that no fame,
Have ye dispite to have my name,
Nay ye shall lien everichone :
Blowe thy trumpe and that anone,”
(Quod she) “thou Eolus I hote,
And ring these folkes workes by note,
That all the world may of it heare :
And he gan blowe hir loos so cleare,
In his golden clarioun,
Through the worlde went the soun,
Also kindly and eke so soft,
That their fame was blowe aloft.

Tho came the sixt companie,
And gan fast to Fame crie,
Right verely in this manere,
They saiden, “Mercy lady dere,
To tell certain as it is,
We have done neither that ne this,
But idell all our life hath be,
But nathelesse yet pray we,
That we may have as good a fame,
And great renome and knowen name,
As they that have do noble jestes,
And acheved all hir questes,
As well of love as other thing,
All was us never broche ne ring,
Ne els what fro women sent,
Ne ones in hir herte yment,

To maken us onely frendly chere,
But mought temen us on bere,
Yet let us to the people seeme
Soch as the world may of us deeme,
That women loven us for wood,
It shall do us as moch good,
And to our herte as moch availe,
The counterpeise, ease, and travaile,
As we had won with labour,
For that is dere bought honour,
At regard of our great ease :
And yet ye must us more please,
Let us be hold eke therto,
Worthy, wise, and good also,
And rich, and happy unto love.
For Goddes love that sitteth above,
Though we may not the body have
Of women, yet so God me save,
Let men glewe on us the name,
Suffiseth that we have the fame."

"I graunt" (quod she) "by my trouth,
Now Eolus withouten slouth,
Take out thy trumpe of gold" (quod she)
"And blowe as they have asked me,
That every man wene hem at ease,
Though they go in full badde lease,"
This Eolus gan it so blowe,
That through the world it was yknow.

Tho came the seventh route anone,
And fill on knees everichone,
And sayed, "Lady graunt us soone,
The same thing, the same boone,
That this nexte folke have done."

"Fie on you" (quod she) "everichene,

Ye nastie swine, ye idle wretches,
Full of rotten slow tetches,
What false theeves where ye wold,
Been famed good, and nothing n'old
Deserve why, ne never thought,
Men rather you to hangen ought,
For ye be like the slepie cat,
That would have fish: but wost thou what?
He woll nothing wette his clawes,
Evil thrifte come to your jawes,
And on mine, if I it graunt,
Or do favour you to avaunt.

“Thou Eolus, thou king of Thrace,
Go blowe this folke a sorie grace,”
Quod she, “anone, and wost thou how,
As I shall tell thee right now,
Say these ben they that would honour
Have, and do no kind labour,
Ne do no good, and yet have laude,
And that men wende that belle Isaude,
Ne coude hem not of love werne,
And yet she that grint at querne,
Is all too good to ease hir herte.”

This Eolus anone up sterte,
And with his blacke clarioun
He gan to blasen out a soun,
As loude as belleth winde in Hell,
And eke therewith sothe to tell,
This sowne was so full of japes,
As ever mowes were in apes,
And that went all the world about,
That every wight gan on hem shout,
And for to laugh as they were wood,
Such game found they in hir hood.

Tho came another company,
That had ydone the trechery,
The harme and great wickednesse,
That any herte coulden gesse,
And prayed her to have good fame,
And that she n'olde do hem no shame,
But give hem loos and good renoun,
And do it blowe in clarioun.

“Nay wis,” quod she, “it were a vice,
Al be there in me no justice,
Me list not to do it now,
Ne this I n'll graunt it you.”

Tho came there leaping in a rout,
And gan clappen all about,
Every man upon the crowne
That all the hall gan to sowne,
And said, “Lady lefe and dere,
We ben soch folkes as ye may here,
To tell all the tale aright,
We ben shrewes every wight,
And have delite in wickednesse,
As good folke have in goodnesse,
And joy to been knowen shrewes,
And full vice and wicked thewes,
Wherefore we pray you on a rowe,
That our fame be such yknow,
In all things right as it is.

“I graunt it you,” quod she, “ywis,
But what art thou that saiest this tale,
That wearest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tippet soch a bell?”

“Madame,” quod he, “sothe to tell,
I am that ilke shrewe ywis
That brent the temple of Isidis

In Athenes, lo that citee."

"And wherefore diddest thou so," quod she!

"By my trouth," quod he, "madame,

I wolde faine have had a name,

As other folke had in the towne,

Although they were of great renowne

For hir vertue and hir thewes,

Thought I, as great fame have shrewes:

(Though it be nought) for shrewdnesse,

As good folke have for goodnesse,

And sithen I may not have that one,

That other n'ill I not forgone,

As for to get a fame here,

The temple set I all on fire.

"Now done our loos be blowe swithe,

As wisely be thou ever blithe."

"Gladly," quod she, "thou Eolus,
Herest thou not what they prayen us,"

"Madame yes, full well," quod he,

"And I will trumpen it parde:"

And tooke his blacke trumpe fast,

And gan to puffen and to blast,

Till it was at the worlds end.

With that I gan about wend,

For one that stode right at my backe,

Me thought full goodly to me spake,

And said, "Frende what is thy name!

Arte thou come hider to have fame?"

"Nay forsothe frende," quod I,

"I come not hither, graunt mercy,

For no soch cause by my heed,

Suffiseth me as I were deed,

That no wight have my name in honde

I wot my selfe best how I stonde,

For what I drie or what I thinke,
I woll my selfe all it drinke,
Certaine for the more part,
As ferforth as I can mine art."
"What dost thou here than" (quod he :)
(Quod I) "that woll I tell thee,
The cause why I stand here,
Some new tidings for to lere,
Some new thing, I not what,
Tidings eyther this or that,
Of love, or such things glade,
For certainly he that me made
To come hyder, said to mee
I sholde bothe heare and see,
In this place wonder things,
But these be no soch tidings
As I meant of:—"No" (quod he)
And I answerde "No parde,
For well I wote ever yet,
Sith that first I had wit,
That some folke han desired fame,
Diversly, and loos and name,
But certainly I n'ist how,
Ne where that Fame dwelled or now.
Ne eke of her descripcion,
Ne also her condicion,
Ne the order of her dome,
Knew I not till I hider come."

"Why than be lo these tidings,
That thou now hether brings,
That thou hast herde" (quod he to mee)
"But now no force for well I see
What thou desirest for to lere,
Come forth and stande no lenger here,

And I woll thee without drede,
Into soch another place lede,
There thou shalt here many one."

Tho gan I forth with him gone,
Out of the castell sothe to sey.

Tho sawe I stand in a valey,
Under the castell fast by,
An house, that domus Dedali,
That Laborintus ycleped is,
N'as made so wonderly ywis,
Ne halfe so queintly ywrought,
And evermo, as swift as thought,
This queint house about went,
That nevermo it still stent,
And there came out so great a noise,
That had it stonde upon Oise,
Men might have heard it easily
To Rome, I trowe sikerly,
And the noise which that I herde,
For all the world right so it ferde,
As doth the routing of the stone,
That fro th'engin is letyn gone.

And all this house of which I rede,
Was made of twigges, salow, rede,
And green eke, and some were white,
Such as men to the cages twite,
Or maken of these paniers.
Or els hutches or doffers,
That for the swough and for the twigges,
This house was also full of gigges,
And also full eke of chirkinges,
And of many other werkings,
And eke this house hath of entrees
As many as leves ben on trees,

In sommer whan they been greene,
And on the rose yet men may seeene
A thousand holes, and wel mo,
To letten the sowne out go,
And by day in every tide
Bene all the dores open wide,
And by night eche one unshet,
Ne porter is there none to let
No maner tidings in to pace,
Ne never rest is in that place,
That it n'is filled full of tidings,
Eyther loude or of whisperings,
And ever all the houses angles,
Is ful of rownings and of jangles,
Of werres, of peace, of mariages,
Of restes, and of labour, of viages,
Of abode, of death, and of lyfe,
Of love, of hate, accord, of strife,
Of losse, of lore, and of winnings,
Of heale, of sicknesse, or of lesings,
Of faire wether, and eke of tempests,
Of qualme, of folke, and of beests,
Of divers transmutacions,
Of estates and eke of regions,
Of trust, of drede, of jalousie,
Of witte, of winning, of folie,
Of plenty, and of great famine,
Of chepe, derth, and of ruine,
Of good or misgovernment,
Of fire, and of divers accident.

And lo, this house of which I write,
Syker be ye it na's not lite,
For it was sixtie mile of length,
Al was the timber of no strength,

Yet it is founded to endure,
While that it list to aventure,
That is the mother of tidings,
As the sea of welles and springs,
And it was shaped lyke a cage.

“ Certes” (quod I) “ in all mine age,
Ne saw I soch an house as this,”
And as I wondred me ywis,
Upon this house tho ware was I,
How mine egle fast by,
Was perched hie upon a stone,
And I gan streight to him gone,
And said thus, “ I pray thee
That thou a while abide mee
For goddes love, and let me scene
What wonders in that place bene,
For yet paraunter I may lere
Some good therein, or somewhat here,
That lese me were, or that I went.”

“ Peter that is now mine entent,”
(Quod he to me) “ therefore I dwell,
But certaine one thing I thee tell,
That but I bring thee therin,
Ne shall thou never conne the gin,
To come into it out of doubt,
So faste it whirleth lo about,
But sith that Joves of his grace,
As I have said will the solace,
Finally with these things
Uncouth sighes and tidings,
To passe with thine hevinesse,
Soch routh hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffredest debonairly,
And woste they selven utterly,

Desperate of all blisse,
Sith that fortune hath made a misse,
The swete of all thine hertes rest,
Languish and eke in point to brest,
But he through his mighty merite,
Wil do thee ease, al be it lite,
And gave in expresse commaundement,
To which I am obedient,
To forther thee with all my might,
And wish and teach thee aright,
Where thou maist most tidings here,
Thou shalt here many one lere.”
With this word he right anone,
Hent me up bytwene his tone,
And at a window in me brought,
That in this house was at me thought,
And therewithall me thought it stent,
And nothing it about went,
And me set in the floore adoun
But such a great congregacioun
Of folke as I sawe rome about,
Some within and some without,
N’as never seene, ne shall be efte
That certes in this world n’is lefte,
So many formed by nature,
Ne need so many a creature,
That wel unneth in that place
Had I a foote brede of space,
And every wight that I sawe there,
Rowned everich in others eere,
A new tiding prively,
Or els he told it all openly
Right thus, and said : “ N’ost nat thou
That is betidde, lo right now.”

“No” (quod he) “tell me what,”
And than he told him this and that,
And swore thereto that it was soth,
Thus hath he said, and thus he doth,
And this shal be, and thus herde I say,
That shal be found that dare I lay :
That all the folke that is on live,
Ne have the conning to discrive,
Tho thinges that I herde there,
What a loude, and what in eere,
But all the wonder most was this,
Whan one had herd a thing ywis,
He came streight to another wight
Ane gan him tellen anon right,
The same that him was told
Or it a forlong way was old.
And gan somewhat for to eche
To this tiding in his speche,
More than ever it spoken was,
And nat so sone departed n’as
That fro him that he ne mette
With the third, and ere he lette
Any stound he told hym alse,
Where the tidings sothe or false,
Yet wold he tell it natheles,
And evermore with mo encrees,
Than it was erst : thus north and south,
Went every tiding fro mouth to mouth,
And that encreasing evermo,
As fire is wont to quicken and go
From a sparele sprongen amis,
Till a citie brent up is.

And whan that was full up sprong,
And waxen more on every tonge

Than ever it was, and went anone
Up to a window out to gone,
Or but it might out there passe,
It gan out crepe at some crevasse,
And flewe forth fast for the nones.

And sometime I saw there at ones,
A leasing and a sadde sothe sawe,
That gonnen of aventure drawe,
Out at a window for to pace,
And whan they metten in that place,
They were achecked both two,
And neyther of them might out go,
For ech other they gonne so croude
Till ech of hem gan crien loude,
“Let me gone first,”—“nay but let mee,
And here I woll ensuren thee.

With vowes that thou wolt do so,
That I shall never fro thee go,
But be thine owne sworne brother,
We woll meddle us eche in other,
That no man be he never so wrothe,
Shall have one two, but bothe
At ones, as beside his leve,
Come we a morrowe or on eve,
But we cride or still yrowned :”
Thus saw I false and soth compowned,
Togider flie for o tiding.

Thus out at holes gonne wring,
Every tidying streight to Fame,
And she gan yeve eche his name,
After her disposicion,
And yeve hem eke duracion.
Some to wexe and wane soone,
As doth the faire white Moone,

And let hem gonne, there might I seen
Winged wonders fast fleen,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blewe aboute,
And lord this house in all times
Was full of shipmen and pilgrimes,
With scrippes bret-full of leasings,
Entermelled with tidings,
And eke alone by hemselfe.
O many thousand times twelve
Saw I eke of these pardoners,
Currours, and eke messaungers,
With boxes crommed full of lies
As ever vessell was with lies.
And as I alder-fastest went
About, and did all mine entent,
Me for to playen and for to lere,
And eke a tiding for to here,
That I had herde of some countree
That shall not now be told for mee,
For it no need is redely
Folke can sing it bet than I,
For al mote out late or rathe,
All the sheves in the lathe.

I herde a great noise withall
In a corner of the hall,
There men of love tidings told
And I gan thitherward behold,
For I saw renning every wight,
As fast as that they hadden might,
And everich cride "What thing is that,"
And some said "I n'ot never what,"
And whan they were all on a hepe,
Tho behind gone up lepe,

And clamben up on other faste
And up the noyse on highen caste,
And treden fast on others heles
And stampe as men done after eles.

At the last I saw a man,
Which that I nought ne can,
But he seemed for to be
A man of great auctorite.

And therewithall I abraide
Out of my slepe halfe afraide,
Remembring well what I had sene
And how hie and ferre I had bene
In my gost, and had great wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Had let me knowen, and began to write
Like as ye have herd me endite,
Wherefore to study and rede alway,
I purpose to do day by day.

Thus in dreaming and in game,
Endeth this litell booke of Fame.

HERE ENDETH THE BOOKE OF FAME.



THE COMPLAINT OF MARS AND VENUS.

GLADETH ye lovers in the morowe graie,
Lo Venus risen among yon rowes rede,
And floures freshe honour ye this daie,
For whan the Sun uprist than wold they sprede,
But ye lovers that lie in any drede,
Flieth least wicked tongues you aspie,
Lo yonde the Sun, the candell of jelousie.

With tears blew, and with a wounded herte
Taketh your leve, and with saint John to borow
Apeseth somewhat of your paines smert,
Time cometh eft, that cessen shall your sorrow,
The glad night is worth an heavy morow,
Saint Valentine, a foule thus heard I sing,
Upon thy day, or Sunne gan up spring.

Yet sang this foule, "I rede you all awake,
And ye that have not chosen in humble wise,
Without repenting cheseth your make,
Yet at the least, renoveleth your service :
And ye that have full chosen as I devise,
Confermeth it perpetually to dure,
And patiently taketh your aventure."

And for the worship of this high feast,
Yet woll I in my birdes wise sing,
The sentence of the complaint at the least,

That wofull Mars made at the departing
 Fro fresh Venus in a morowning,
 Whan Phebus with his fire torches rede,
 Ransaked hath every lover in his drede.

Whilome the three Heavens lorde above,
 As well by heavenlich revolution,
 As by desert hath wonne Venus his love,
 And she hath take him in subjection,
 And as a maistresse taught him his lesson,
 Commaunding him never in her service,
 He were so bold no lover to dispise.

For she forbade him jealousie at all,
 And cruelty, and boste, and tyranny,
 She made him at her lust so humble and tall,
 That whan she dained to cast on him her eye,
 He tooke in patience to live or die,
 And thus she bridleth him in her maner,
 With nothing, but with scorning of her chere.

Who reigneth now in blisse but Venus,
 That hath this worthy knight in governance
 Who singeth now but Mars that serveth thus,
 The faire Venus, causer of pleasaunce,
 He bint him to perpetuel obeysaunce,
 And she hinte her to love him for ever,
 But so be that his trespase it discever.

Thus be they knit, and reignen as in Heven,
 By loking most, as it fell on a tide,
 That by hir both assent was set a steven,
 That Mars shall enter as fast as he may glide,
 In to her next palais to abide,
 Walking his course till she had him ytake,
 And he prayed her to hast her for his sake.

Than said he thus, " Mine hertes lady sweete,
Ye know well my mischief in that place,
For sikerly till that I with you meete,
My life stant there in aventure and grace,
But whan I see the Beaute of your face,
There is no drede of death may do me smert,
For all your luste is ease to mine herte."

She hath so great compassion of her knight,
That dwelleth in solitude till she come,
For it stode so, that ilke time no wight,
Counsailed him, ne said to him welcome,
That nigh her wit for sorow was overcome
Wherfore she spedded as fast in her way,
Almost in one day as he did in tway.

The great joy that was betwix hem two,
Whan they be mette, there may no tong tel,
There is no more but unto bedde they go,
And thus in joy and blisse I let hem dwell,
This worthy Mars that is of knight hood well,
The floure of fairnesse happeth in his arms,
And Venus kisseth Mars the god of arms.

Sojourned hath this Mars of which I rede
In chambre amidde the palais prively,
A certaine time, till him fell a drede,
Through Phebus that was commen hastely,
Within the palais yates sturdely,
With torch in hound, of which the stremes bright
On Venus chambre, knockeden ful light.

The chambre there as lay this fresh queene,
Depainted was with white boles grete,
And by the light she knew that shon so shene,
That Phebus cam to bren hem with his hete

This sely Venus ny dreint in teares wete,
Enbraseth Mars, and said “Alas I die,
The torch is come, that al this world wol wrie.”

Up sterte Mars, him list not to sleepe,
Whan he his lady herde so complaine,
But for his nature was not for to weepe,
Instede of teares from his eyen twaine,
The fry sparcles sprongen out for paine,
And hente his hauberke that lay him beside,
Flie wold he nought, ne might himself hide.

He throweth on his helme of huge weight,
And girt him with his swerde, and in his honde
His mighty speare, as he was wont to feight,
He shaketh so, that it almost to wonde,
Full hevy was he to walken over londe,
He may not hold with Venus company,
But bad her flie least Phebus her espy.

O woful Mars alas, what maist thou sain
That in the palais of thy disturbaunce,
Art left behind in peril to be slain,
And yet there to is double thy penaunce,
For she that hath thine herte in governance,
Is passed halfe the stremes of thine eyen,
That thou nere swift, wel maist thou wepe and
crien.

Now flieth Venus in to Ciclinus tour,
With void corse, for fear of Phebus light,
Alas and there hath she no socour,
For she ne found ne sey no maner wight,
And eke as there she had but littel might,
Wherefore her selven for to hide and save,
Within the gate she fledde in to a cave.

Darke was this cave, and smoking as the hell
Nat but two paas within the yate it stood,
A naturel day in darke I let her dwell,
Now wol I speake of Mars furious and wood,
For sorow he wold have seene his herte blood,
Sith that he might have done her no company,
He ne rought not a mite for to die.

So feble he wext for hete and for his wo,
That nigh he swelt, he might unneth endure
He passeth but a sterre in daies two,
But nevertheles, for al his hevy armure,
He foloweth her that is his lives cure,
For whose departing he tooke greater ire,
Than for his brenning in the fire.

After he walketh softly a paas,
Complaining that it pitie was to here,
He saide, "O lady bright Venus alas,
That ever so wide a compas is my sphere,
Alas, whan shall I mete you herte dere,
This twelve dayes of April I endure,
Through jelous Phebus this misaventure."

Now God helpe sely Venus alone,
But as God wold it happed for to be,
That while the weping Venus made her mone
Ciclinius riding in his chivachec,
Fro Venus Valanus might this palais see,
And Venus he salveth, and maketh chere,
And her receiveth as his frende full dere.

Mars dwelleth forth in his adversite,
Complaining ever in her departing,
And what his complaint was remembreth me,

And therefore in this lusty morowning,
As I best can, I wol it saine and sing,
And after that I woll my leave take,
And God yeve every wight joy of his make.

THE COMPLAINT OF MARS.

THE order of complaint requireth skilfully,
That if a wight shal plaine pitously,
There mote be cause wherfore that he him plain,
Or men may deme he plaineth folily,
And causeles: alas that do not I.
Wherfore the ground and cause of al my pain,
So as my troubled witte may it attain,
I wol reherse, not for to have redresse,
But to declare my ground of hevinesse.

The first time alas that I was wrought,
And for certain effects hider brought,
By him that lorded each intelligence,
I yave my trew service and my thought,
For evermo, how dere I have it bought,
To her that is of so great excellence,
That what wight that sheweth first her offence,
Whan she is wroth and taketh of him no cure,
He may not long in joy of love endure.

This is no fained mater that I tell,
My lady is the very sours and well
Of beaute, luste, fredome, and gentillesse,
Of rich array, how dere men it sell,
Of all disport in which men frendly dwell,
Of love and play, and of benigne humblesse,
Of sowne of instruments of al sweetnesse,

And thereto so well fortunèd and thewèd,
That through the world her goodnes is shewèd.

What wonder is than though that I be set
My service on soch one that may me knet
To wele or wo, sith it lithe in her might,
Therefore mine herte for ever I to her hette,
Ne trewly for my death shall I not lette,
To ben her trewest servaunt and her knight,
I flatter not, that may wete every wight,
For this day in her service shall I dye,
But grace be, I see her never with eye.

To whom shall I plaine of my distresse,
Who may me help, who may my herte redresse ?
Shall I complaine unto my lady free,
Nay certes, for she hath such heavynesse,
For feare and eke for wo, that as I gesse,
In littel time it would her bane bee,
But were she safe, it were no force of mee,
Alas that ever lovers mote endure,
For love so many perilous aventure.

For though so be that lovers be as trewe,
As any metal that is forged newe,
In many a case hem tideth oft sorowe,
Somtime hir ladies woll nat on hem rewe.
Somtime if that jelousie it knewe,
They might lightly lay hir heed to borowe.
Somtime envious folke with tonges horowe,
Depraven hem alas, whom may they please,
But he be false, no lover hath his ease.

But what availeth such a long sermoun,
Of adventures of love up and doun,

I wol retourne and speaken of my paine,
The point is this of my distruction,
My right lady, my salvacioun,
Is in affray, and not to whom to plaine,
O herte sweete, O lady souveraine,
For your disease I ought wel swoun and swelt,
Though I none other harme ne drede felt.

To what fine made the God that sit so hie,
Beneth him love [or] other companie,
And straineth folke to love mauger hir heed,
And than hir joy for aught I can espie,
Ne lasteth not the twinckling of an eye,
And some have never joy till they be deed,
What meaneth this, what is this mistiheed,
Wherto constraineth he his folke so fast,
Thing to desire but it should last.

And though he made a lover love a thing,
And maketh it seem stedfast and during,
Yet putteth he in it soch misaventure,
That rest n'is there in his yeving.
And that is wonder that so just a king,
Doth such hardnesse to his creature,
Thus whether love breake or els dure,
Algates he that hath with love to doon,
Hath after wo, than chaunged is the Moon.

It seemeth he hath to lovers enmite,
And like a fisher, as men may all day se,
Baited his angle hoke with some pleasance,
Til many a fish is wood till that he be
Ceased therwith, and than at erst hath he
All his desire, and therwith all mischaunce,
And though the line breke he hath penaunce,

For with that hoke he wounded is so sore,
That he his wages hath for evermore.

The broche of Thebes was of soch kinde,
So full of rubies and of stones of Inde,
That every wight that set on it an eye,
He wende anone to worth out of his mind,
So sore the beaute wold his herte bind,
Till he it had, him thought he must die,
And whan that it was his than should he drie,
Soch wo for drede, aye while that he it had,
That welnigh for the feare he should [be] mad.

And whan it was fro his possession,
Than had he double wo and passion,
That he so faire a jewell hath forgo,
But yet this broche, as in conclusion,
Was not the cause of his confusion,
But he that wrought it enfortuned it so,
That every wight that had it shold have wo,
And therfore in the worcher was the vice,
And in the coveitour that was so nice.

So fareth it by lovers, and by me,
For though my lady have so great beaute,
That I was mad till I had gette her grace,
She was not cause of mine adversite,
But he that wrought her, as mote I the,
That put soch a beaute in her face,
That made me coveiten and purchase
Mine owne death, him wite I, that I die,
And mine unwit that ever I clambe so hie,

But to you hardy knightes of renoune,
Sith that ye be of my devisioun,

Albe I not worthy to so great a name,
Yet saine these clerkes I am your patroune,
Therefore ye ought have some compassion
Of my disease, and take it nat a game,
The proudest of you may be made ful tame,
Wherfore I pray you of your gentillesse,
That ye complaine for mine heavinesse.

And ye my ladies that be true and stable,
By way of kind ye ought to ben able,
To have pite of folke that been in paine,
Now have ye cause to cloth you in sable,
Sith that your empresse the honorable,
Is desolate, wel ought you to plaine,
Now should your holy teares fall and raine,
Alas your honour and your emprise,
Nigh dead for drede, ne can her not chevis.

Complaineth eke ye lovers all in fere,
For her that with unfained humble chere,
Was ever redy to do you socour,
Complaineth her that ever hath be you dere,
Complaineth beaute, freedome, and manere,
Complaineth her that endeth your labour,
Complaineth thilke ensample of al honour,
That never did but gentiluesse,
Kitheth therfore in her some kindnesse.

THE COMPLAINT OF VENUS.

THERE n'is so high comfort to my pleasance,
Whan that I am in any heavinesse,
As to have leiser of remembraunce,
Upon the manhood and the worthinesse,

Upon the trowth, and on the stedfastnesse,
Of him whose I am all while I may dure,
There ought to blame me no creature,
For every wight praiseth his gentillesse.

In him is bounte, wisdome, and governaunce,
Wel more than any mans witte can gesse,
For grace hath wolde so ferforth him avance,
That of knighthood he his parfite richesse,
Honour honoureth him for his noblesse,
Thereto so well hath fourmed him nature,
That I am his for ever I him ensure,
For every wight praiseth his gentillesse.

And nat withstanding all his suffisaunce,
His gentil herte is of so great humblesse,
To me in word, in werke, and in countenance,
And me to serve in all his besinesse,
That I am sette in very sikernesse,
Thus ought I blisse well mine aventour,
Sith that him list me serven and honour,
For every wight praiseth his gentillesse.

Now certes, Love, it is right covenable,
That men ful dere abie thy noble things,
As wake a bedde, and fasten at the table,
Weping to laugh and sing in complainings,
And downe to cast visage and lookings,
Often to chaunge visage and countenaunce.
Play in sleeping, and dremen at the daunce,
All the revers of any glad feeling.

Jelousie he hanged by a cable,
She wold al know through her espying,
There doth no wight nothing so reasonable,
That al n'is harme in her imagining,

Thus dere about is Love in yeving,
Which oft he yeveth without ordinaunce,
As sorow ynough, and little of pleasaunce,
All the revers of any glad feling.

A little time his yeft is agreable,
But full accombrous is the using,
For subtel jelousie the deceivable,
Full often time causeth distourbing,
Thus ben we ever in drede and suffring,
In no certaine, we languishen in penaunce,
And have well oft many an hard mischance,
All the revers of any glad feling.

But certes, Love, I say not in soch wise,
That for to scape out of your lace I ment,
For I so long have been in your service,
That for to lete of will I never assent,
No force though jelousie me tourment,
Suffiseth me to see him whau I may,
And therefore certes to my ending day,
To love him best, shall me never repent.

And certes, Love, whan I me well advise,
Of any estate that man may represent,
Than have ye made me through your franchise
Thefe the best that ever in earth went,
Now love well herte, and look thou never stent,
And let the jealous put it in assay,
That for no paine woll I not say nay,
To love him best, shall I never repent.

Harte to thee it ought ynough suffice,
That Love so high a grace to you sent,
To chose the worthies in all wise,
And most agreable unto mine entent,

Seek no ferther, neither way ne went,
 Sith ye have suffisaunce unto my pay,
 Thus wol I end this complaining or this lay,
 To love him best shall I never repent.

LENVOY.

Princes receiveth this complaining in gree,
 Unto your excellent benignite,
 Direct after my litel suffisaunce,
 For elde, that in my spirite dulleth mee,
 Hath of enditing all the subtelte
 Welnigh berafte out of my remembraunce :
 And eke to me it is a great penaunce,
 Sith rime in English hath soch scarcite,
 To folow word by word the curiosite
 Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in Fraunce.

EXPLICIT.



OF THE CUCKOW AND THE NIGHT- INGALE.

CHAUCER DREAMETH THAT HE HEARETH THE CUCKOW AND
THE NIGHTINGALE CONTEND FOR EXCELLENCY IN SINGING.

THE god of love, and benedicite,
How mighty and how great a lord is he,
For he can make of low hertes lie,
And of high low, and like for to die,
And hard hertes he can maken free.

He can make within a little stound
Of sicke folke hole, fresh, and sound,
And of hole he can make seke,
He can bind and unbinden eke
That he woll have bounden or unbound.

To tell his might my wit may not suffice,
For he can make of wise folke full nice,
For he may do all that he woll devise,
And lither folke to destroyen vice,
And proud hertes he can make agrise.

Shortly all that ever he woll he may,
Against him dare no wight say nay,
For he can glad and greve whom him liketh,
And who that he woll, he lougheth or siketh,
And most his might he shedeth ever in May.

For every true gentle herte free,
That with him is or thinketh for to be,
Againe May now shall have some stering,
Or to joy or els to some mourning,
In no season so much, as thinketh me.

For whan they may here the birds sing,
And see the floures and the leaves spring,
That bringeth into hir remembraunce
A manner ease, medled with grevaunce,
And lustie thoughts full of great longing.

And of that longing commeth hevinesse,
And thereof groweth of great sicknesse,
And for lacke of that that they desire,
And thus in May ben hertes set on fire,
So that they brennen forth in great distresse.

I speake this of feeling truly,
If I be old and unlusty,
Yet I have felt the sicknesse through May
Both hote and cold, and accesse every day,
How sore ywis there wote no wight but I.

I am so shaken with the fevers white,
Of all this May sleepe I but a lite,
And also it is not like to me,
That any herte should sleepy be,
In whom that Love his firy dart woll smite.

But as I lay this other night waking,
I thought how lovers had a tokening,
And among hem it was a commune tale,
That it were good to here the nightingale,
Rather than the leud cuckow sing.

And than I thought anon as it was day,
I would go some where to assay
If that I might a nightingale here,
For yet had I none heard of all that yere,
And it was tho the third night of May.

And anone as I the day aspidē,
No lenger would I in my bed abide,
But unto a wood that was fast by,
I went forth alone boldly,
And held the way downe by a brooke side.

Till I came to a laund of white and green,
So faire one had I never in been,
The ground was green, ypoudred with daisie,
The floures and the greves like hie,
All greene and white, was nothing els scene.

There sate I downe among the faire flours,
And saw the birds trip out of hir bours,
There as they rested hem all the night,
They were so joyfull of the dayes light,
They began of May for to done honours.

They coud that service all by rote,
There was many a lovely note,
Some song loud as they had plained,
And some in other manner voice yfained,
And some all out with the full throte.

They proyned hem, and made hem right gay,
And daunceden and lepten on the spray,
And evermore two and two in fere,
Right so as they had chosen hem to yere
In Feverere upon saint Valentines day.

And the river that I sate upon,
It made such a noise as it ron,
Accordaunt with the birdes armony,
Me thought it was the best melody
That might ben yheard of any mon.

And for delite, I wote never how
I fell in such a slomber and a swow,
Nat all asleepe, ne fully waking,
And in that swow me thought I hearde sing
The sorry bird the leud cuckow.

And that was on a tree right fast by,
But who was than evill apaid but I:
“Now God” (quod I) “that died on the crois
Yeve sorrow on thee, and on thy leud vois,
Full little joy have I now of thy cry.”

And as I with the cuckow thus gan chide,
I heard in the next bush beside
A nightingale so lustely sing,
That with her clere voice she made ring
Through all the greene wood wide.

“Ah, good nightingale” (quod I then)
“A little hast thou ben too long hen,
For here hath ben the leud cuckow,
And songen songs rather than hast thou,
I pray to God evill fire her bren.”

But now I woll you tell a wonder thing,
As long as I lay in that swouning,
Me thought I wist what the birds ment,
And what they said, and what was hir entent,
And of hir speech I had good knowing.

There heard I the nightingale say,
 "Now good cuckow go somewhere away,
 And let us that can singen dwellen here,
 For every wight escheweth thee to here,
 Thy songs be so elenge in good fay."

"What" (quod she) "what may thee aylen now,
 It thinketh me, I sing as well as thou,
 For my song is both true and plaine,
 And though I cannot crakell so in vaine,
 As thou dost in thy throte, I wot never how.

"And every wight may understande mee,
 But nightingale so may they not done thee,
 For thou hast many a nice queint cry,
 I have thee heard saine, ocy, ocy,
 How might I know what that should be?"

"Ah foole" (quod she) "wost thou not what is is,
 Whan that I say, ocy, ocy, ywis,
 Than meane I that I would wonder faine,
 That all they were shamefully yslaine,
 That meanen ought againe love amis.

"And also I would that all tho were dede,
 That thinke not in love hir life to lede,
 For who so that wol not the god of love serve,
 I dare well say he is worthy to sterve,
 And for that skill, ocy, ocy, I grede."

"Eye" (quod the cuckow) "this is a queint law,
 That every wight shall love or be to draw,
 But I forsake all such companie,
 For mine entent is not for to die,
 Ne never while I live on Loves yoke to draw.

“ For lovers ben the folke that ben on live,
 That most disease have, and most unthrive,
 And most endure sorrow, wo, and care,
 And least feelen of welfare,
 What needeth it ayenst trowth to strive.”

“ What ” (quod she) “ thou art out of thy mind,
 How might thou in thy churlenesse find
 To speake of Loves servaunts in this wise,
 For in this world is none so good servise
 To every wight that gentle is of kind.

“ For thereof truly commeth all goodnesse,
 All honour and all gentlenesse,
 Worship, ease, and all hertes lust,
 Parfite joy, and full assured trust,
 Jolitie, pleasaunce, and freshnesse,

“ Lowlyhead, largesse, and curtesie,
 Semelyhead, and true companie,
 Drede of shame for to done amis :
 For he that truly Loves servaunt is,
 Were lother be shamed than to die.

“ And that this is soth that I sey,
 In that beleeve I will live and dey,
 And cuckow so I rede that thou do ywis :”
 “ Than ” (quod he) “ let me never have blisse,
 If ever I unto that counsaile obey.

“ Nightingale thou speakest wonder faire,
 But for all that is the sooth contraire,
 For love is in yong folke but rage,
 And in old folke a great dotage,
 Who most it useth, most shall enpaire.

“ For thereof cometh disease and hevinesse,
 So sorow and care, and many a great sicknesse,
 Despite, debate, anger, and envie,
 Depraving, shame, untrust, and jelousie,
 Pride, mischeefe, poverty, and woodnesse :

“ Loving is an office of despaire,
 And one thing is therein that is not faire,
 For who that getteth of love a little blisse,
 But if he be alway therewith ywis,
 He may full soone of age have his haire.

“ And nightingale therefore hold thee nie,
 For leve me well, for all thy queint crie,
 If thou be ferre or long fro thy make,
 Thou shalt be as other that been forsake,
 And than thou shalt hoten as doe I.”

“ Fie ” (quod she) “ on thy name and on thee,
 The god of love ne let thee never ythe,
 For thou art worse a thousand fold than wood,
 For many a one is full worthy and full good,
 That had be naught ne had love ybe.

“ For evermore Love his servants amendeth,
 And from all evill taches hem defendeth,
 Ane maketh hem to brenne right in a fire,
 In trouth and in worshipfull desire,
 And whan him liketh, joy inough him sendeth.”

“ Thou nightingale ” he said, “ be still,
 For Love hath no reason, but it is will,
 For oft time untrue folke he easeth,
 And true folke so biterly he displeaseth,
 That for default of courage he let hem spill.”

Than tooke I of the nightingale keepe,
How she cast a sigh out of her deepe,
And said, "Alas that ever I was bore,
I can for tene not say one word more,"
And right with that word she brast out to weepe.

"Alas" (quod she) "my herte woll to breake,
To hearen thus this leud bird speake
Of Love, and of his worshipfull servise,
Now God of love thou help me in some wise,
That I may on this cuckow been awreake."

Me thought than he stert up anone,
And glad was I that he was agone,
And evermore the cuckow as he flay,
Said "Farewell, farewell popingay,
As though he had scorned me alone.

And than came the nightingale to mee,
And said, "Friend forsooth I thanke thee,
That thou hast liked me to rescow,
And one avow to love make I now,
That all this May I woll thy singer be."

"I thanked her, and was right well apaid :
"Ye" (quod she) "and be thou not dismaied,
Tho thou have herd the cuckow erst than me,
For if I live, it shall amended be
The next May, if I be not affraied.

"And one thing I woll rede thee also,
Ne leve thou not the cuckow, ne his loves so,
For all that he hath said is strong lesing :"
"Nay" (quod I) "thereto shall nothing mebring,
For love and it hath doe me much wo.

“Ye, use” (quod she) “this medicine
 Every day this May or thou dine,
 Go looke upon the fresh daisie,
 And though thou be for wo in point to die,
 That shall full greatly lessen thee of thy pine.

“And looke alway that thou be good and trew,
 And I woll sing one of the songes new
 For love of thee, as loud as I may crie :”
 And than she began this song full hie,
 “I shrew all hem that been of love untrue.”

And whan she had song it to the end,
 “Now farewell” (quod she) “for I mote wend,
 And god of love, that can right well, and may,
 As much joy send thee this day,
 As any lover yet he ever send.”

Thus taketh the nightingale her leave of me,
 I pray to God alway with her be,
 And joy of love he send her evermore,
 And shilde us fro the cuckow and his lore,
 For there is not so false a bird as he.

Forth she flew the gentle nightingale
 To all the birds that were in that dale,
 And gate hem all into a place in fere,
 And besoughten hem that they would here
 Her disease, and thus began her tale.

“The cuckow, well it is not for to hide,
 How the cuckow and I fast have chide,
 Ever sithen it was day light,
 I pray you all that ye do me right
 On that foule false unkind bridde.”

Than spake o bird for all, by one assent,
“ This matter asketh good avisement,
For we ben birdes here in fere,
And sooth it is, the cuckow is not here,
And therefore we woll have a parliment.

“ And thereat shall the egle be our lord,
And other peres that been of record,
And the cuckow shall be after sent,
There shall be yeve the judgement,
Or els we shall finally make accord.

“ And this shall be without nay
The morrow after saint Valentines day,
Under a maple that is faire and grene,
Before the chamber window of the quene,
At Woodstocke upon the grene lay.”

She thanked hem, and than her leave toke,
And into an hauthorne by that broke,
And there she sate and song upon that tree,
“ Terme of life love hath withhold me,”
So loud that I with that song awoke.

EXPLICIT.

O LEUD book with thy foule rudenesse,
Sith thou haste neither beauty ne eloquence,
Who hath thee caused or yeve the hardinesse
For to appeare in my ladies presence,
I am full siker thou knowest her benevolence,
Full agreeable to all her abyng,
For of all good she is the best living.

Alas that thou ne haddest worthinesse,
 To shew to her some pleasaunt sentence,
 Sith that she hath through her gentillesse
 Accepted the servant to her digne reverence,
 O, me repenteth that I ne had science
 And leiser als, to make thee more flourishing,
 For of all good she is the best living.

Beseech her meekely with all lowlinesse,
 Though I be ferre from her in absence,
 To think on my trowth to her and stedfastnesse,
 And to abridge of my sorrowes the violence,
 Which caused is, wherof knoweth your sapience,
 She like among to notifie me her liking
 For of all good she is the best living.

LENVOYE.

AUORE of gladnesse, and day of lustinesse,
 Lucern a night with heavenly influence
 Illumined, root of beauty and goodnesse,
 Suspires which I effunde in silence,
 Of grace I beseech alledge let your writing,
 Now of all good, sith ye be best living.

EXPLICIT.



THE COURT OF LOVE.

This book is an imitation of the Romaunt of the Rose, shewing that all are subject to love, what impediments soever to the contrary : containing also those twenty statutes which are to be observed in the Court of Love.

WITH temerous herte, and trembling hand
of drede,
Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence,
Unto the floure of portc in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metres hath, ne floures of sentence :
Saufe that me list my writing to convey,
In that I can to please her high nobley.

The blosomes fresh of Tullius gardein sote
Present they not, my matter for to born :
Poemes of Virgil taken here no rote,
Ne craft of Galfride, may not here sojourn :
Why n'am I cunning? O well may I mourn
For lacke of science, that I cannot write
Unto the princes of my life aright.

No tearmes digne unto her excellence,
So is she sprong of noble stirpe and high :
A world of honour and of reverence
There is in her, this will I testifie,
Caliope thou suster wise and slie,

And thou Minerva, guide me with thy grace,
That language rude, my matter not deface.

Thy suger droppes sweet of Helicon
Distill in me, thou gentle Muse I pray,
And thee Melpomene I call anone,
Of ignoraunce the mist to chase away :
And give me grace so for to write and say,
That she my lady of her worthinesse
Accept in gree this little short treatesse,

That is entituled thus, The Court of Love :
And ye that ben metrichiens me excuse,
I you beseech for Venus sake above,
For what I mean in this, ye need not muse :
And if so be my lady it refuse
For lacke of ornate speech, I would be wo,
That I presume to her to writen so.

But my entent and all my busie cure
Is for to write this treatesse, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Faithfull and kind, sith first that she began
Me to accept in service as her man :
To her be all the pleasure of this book,
That whan her like she may it rede and look.

WHAN I was young, at eighteene yeare of age.
Lusty and light, desirous of plcasauce,
Approching on full sadde and ripe courage,
Love arted me to do my observaunce,
To his estate, and done him obeisaunce,
Commaunding me the Court of Love to see,
Alite beside the mount of Citharee.

There Citherea goddesse was and quene :
Honoured highly for her majeste,
And eke her sonne, the mighty god I wene,
Cupide the blind, that for his dignitee
A thousand lovers worship on their knee,
There was I bid in paine of death to pere,
By Mercury the winged messengere.

So than I went by strange and fer countrees,
Enquiring aye what coast had to it drew
The Court of Love : and thiderward as bees,
At last I see the people gan pursue :
And me thought some wight was there that knew
Where that the court was holden ferre or nie,
And after them full fast I gan me hie.

Anone as I them overtooke, I said :
“Haile friends, whither purpose ye to wend”
“Forsooth” (quod one) that answeredliche a maid,
“To Loves Court now go we gentle friend.”
“Where is that place” (quod I) “my fellow hend?”
“At Citheron, sir,” said he, “withoute dout,
The king of love, and all his noble rout,

“Dwelleth within a castle rially.”

So than apace I journed forth among,
And as he said, so fond I there truly :
For I beheld the toures high and strong,
And high pinacles, large of hight and long,
With plate of gold bespred on every side,
And precious stones, the stone werke for to hide.

No saphire in Inde, no rubie rich of price,
There lacked than, nor emeraud so grene,
Bales Turkes, ne thing to my device,
That may the castle maken for to shene :

All was as bright as sterres in winter bene,
And Phebus shone to make his peace ageine,
For trespas done to high estates tweine.

Venus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,
Whan he them found in armes cheined fast,
Venus was than full sad of herte and chere :
But Phebus' beams streight as is the mast,
Upon the castle ginneth he to cast,
To please the lady, princes of that place,
In signe he looketh after Loves grace.

For there n'is god in Heaven or Hell ywis,
But he hath ben right soget unto Love :
Jove, Pluto, or whatsoever he is,
Ne creature in yearth, or yet above,
Of these the revers may no wight approve :
But furthermore, the castle to descrie,
Yet saw I never none so large and hie.

For unto Heaven it stretcheth, I suppose,
Within and out depeinted wonderly,
With many a thousand daisies rede as rose,
And white also this saw I verely :
But who tho daisies might do signifie,
Can I not tell, safe that the quenes floure,
Alceste it was that kept there her sojoure :

Which under Venus lady was and quene,
And Admete king and souveraine of that place,
To whom obeied the ladies good ninetene,
With many a thousand other bright of face :
And yong men fele came forth with lusty pace,
And aged eke, their homage to dispose,
But what they were, I coud not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dress
Into an hall of noble apparaile,
With arras spred, and cloth of gold I gesse,
And other silke of esier availe :
Under the cloth of their estate sauns faile
The king and quene there sat as I beheld :
It passed joy of Helise the field.

There saints have their comming and resort,
To seene the king so rially beseine
In purple clad, and eke the quene in sort,
And on their heads saw I crownes twaine,
With stones fret, so that it was no paine,
Withouten meat and drink to stand and see
The kinges honour and the rialtee.

And for to treat of states with the king,
That ben of councel cheef, and with the quene :
The king had Danger nere to him standing,
The quene of love, Disdain, and that was sene :
For by the faith I shall to God, I wene
Was never straunger none in her degree,
Than was the quene in casting of her eye.

And as I stood perceiving her apart,
And eke the beames shining of her eyen,
Me thought they weren shapen lich a dart,
Sharp and persing, and smal and streight of line :
And all her haire it shone as gold so fine,
Dishivil criske, downe hanging at her backe
A yard in length : and soothly than I spake.

“ O bright regina, who made thee so faire ?
Who made thy colour vermelet and white ?
Wher wonneth that god, how far above the aire ?
Great was his craft, and great was his delite.

Now marvell I nothing that ye do hight
This quene of love, and occupie the place
Of Cithare: now sweet lady thy grace."

In mewet spake I so, that nought astart
By no condition word, that might be hard:
But in my inward thought I gan advert,
And oft I said "My wit is dull and hard:"
For with her beauty, thus God wot I ferde,
As doth the man yravished with sight,
Whan I beheld her cristall eyen so bright:

No respect having what was best to doone,
Till right anone beholding here and there,
I spied a friend of mine, and that full soone,
A gentlewoman was the chamberere
Unto the quene, that hote as ye shall here,
Philobone, that loved all her life:
Whan she me sey, she led me forth as blife;

And me demanded how and in what wise
I thither come, and what my errand was?
"To seen the court" (quod I) "and all the guise,
And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
And mercy aske for all my great trespase,
That I none erst come to the Court of Love:
Foryeve me this, ye goddes all above."

"That is well said" (quod Philobone) "indede:
But were ye not assomoned to appere
By Mercurius, for that is all my drede:"
"Yes gentill feire" (quod I) "now am I here,
Ye yet what tho though that be true my dere:"
"Of your free will ye should have come unsent,
For ye did not, I deme ye will be shent."

“For ye that reigne in youth and lustinesse,
Pampired with ease, and jalous in your age,
Your duty is, as ferre as I can gesse,
To Loves Court to dresen your viage,
As soone as nature maketh you so sage,
That ye may know a woman from a swan,
Or whan your foot is growen halfe a span.

“But sith that ye by wilfull negligence
This eighteene year hath kept your self at large,
The greater is your trespas and offence,
And in your neck you mote bere all the charge :
For better were ye ben withouten barge
Amidde the sea in tempest and in raine,
Than biden here, receiving wo and paine

“That ordained is for such as them absent
Fro Loves Court by yeres long and fele.
I ley my life ye shall full soone repent,
For Love will rive your colour, lust, and hele :
Eke ye must bait on many an heavy mele :
No force ywis : I stirred you long agoone
To draw to court” (quod little) Philobone.

“Ye shall well see how rough and angry face
The king of love will shew, whan ye him se :
By mine advise kneel down and ask him grace,
Eschewing perill and adversite,
For well I wote it woll none other be,
Comfort is none, ne counsell to your ease,
Why will ye than the king of love displease ?”

“O mercy God” (quod iche) “I me repent,
Caitife and wretch in herte, in will and thought,
And after this shall be mine hole entent
To serve and please, how dere that love be bought :

Yet sith I have mine own pennance ysought,
With humble sprite shall I it receive,
Though that the king of love my life bereive.

“ And though that fervent loves qualite
In me did never worch truly : yet I
With all obeisaunce and humilite,
And benigne herte shall serve him till I die :
And he that lord of might is great and hie,
Right as him list me chastice and correct,
And punish me with trespase thus infect.”

These wordes said, she caught me by the lap,
And led me forth in till a temple round,
Both large and wide : and as my blessed hap
And good aventure was, right soone I found
A tabernacle raised from the ground,
Where Venus sat, and Cupide by her side,
Yet halfe for drede I can my visage hide.

And eft againe I looked and beheld,
Seeing full sundry people in the place,
And mistere folke, and some that might not weld
Their limmes wele, me thought a wonder case,
The temple shone with windows all of glass,
Bright as the day, with many a fair image,
And there I see the fresh quene of Cartage

Dido, that brent her beauty for the love
Of false Eneas, and the waimenting
Of her Annelida, true as turtle dove,
To Arcite fals : and there was in peinting
Of many a prince, and many a doughty king,
Whose martirdom was shewed about the wals
And how that fele for love had suffred fals.

But sore I was abashed and astonied
Of all tho folke that there were in that tide,
And than I askeden where they had wonned :
“ In divers courts” (quod she) “ here beside.
In sundry clothing mantill wise full wide
They were arraied, and did their sacrificise
Unto the god, and goddesse in their guise.

“ Lo yonder folke” (quod she) “ that kneele in blew,
They weare the colour aye and ever shall,
In signe they were and ever will be trew
Withouten chaunge : and soothly yonder all
That ben in black, and mourning cry and call
Unto the gods, for their loves bene,
Som sick, some dede, som all to sharp and kene.”

“ Yeathan” (quod I) “ what done these priests here,
Nonnes and hermites, freres, and all tho,
That sit in white, in russet, and in grene :”

“ Forsooth” (quod she) “ they wailen of their wo.”

“ O mercy lord, may they so come and go
Freely to court and have such liberty !”

“ Yea men of each condition and degre.

“ And women eke : for truly there is none
Exception made, ne never was ne may :
This court is ope and free for everichone,
The king of love he will not say them nay :
He taketh all in poore or rich array,
That meekely sewe unto his excellence
With all their herte and all their reverence.”

And walking thus about with Philobone
I see where come a messengere in hie
Streight from the king, which let command anone,
Throughout the court to make an ho and cry :
“ All new come folke abide, and wote ye why,

The kings lust is for to seene you sone :
Come nere let see, his will mote need be done."

Than gan I me present tofore the king,
Trembling for fere with visage pale of hew,
And many a lover with me was kneeling,
Abashed sore, till unto the time they knew
The sentence yeve of his entent full trew :
And at the last the king hath me behold
With sterne visage, and seid, "What doth this old

"Thus ferre ystope in yeres, come so late
Unto the court?" "Forsooth, my liege" (quod I)
"An hundred time I have ben at the gate
Afore this time, yet coud I never espie
Of mine acqueintaunce any in mine eie :
And shamefastnesse away me gan to chace,
But now I me submit unto your grace."

"Well, all is pardoned with condition
That thou be true from henceforth to thy might
And serven Love in thine entention,
Sweare this, and than as ferre as it is right,
Thou shalt have grace here in thy quenes sight."
"Yes by the faith I owe to your croun, I swere,
Though Death therefore me thirlith with his
spere."

And whan the king had seene us everychone,
He let commaund an officer in hie
To take our faith, and shew us one by one
The statutes of the court full busily :
Anon the booke was laid before their eie,
To rede and see what thing we must observe
In Loves Court, till that we die and sterve.

AND for that I was lettred, there I red
The statutes hole of Loves Court and hall :
The first statute that on the booke was spred,
Was to be true in thought and deedes all
Unto the king of love the lord riall,
And to the quene as faithfull and as kind,
As I coud thinke with herte, will and mind.

The second statute secretly to kepe
Councell of love, not blowing every where
All that I know, and let it sinke and flete,
It may not sowne in every wights ere :
Exiling slaunder aye for drede and fere,
And to my lady which I love and serve,
Be true and kind her grace for to deserve.

The third statute was clerely writ also,
Withouten chaunge to live and die the same,
None other love to take for wele ne wo,
For blind delite, for earnest nor for game :
Without repent for laughing or for grame,
To bidden still in full perseveraunce,
All this was hole the kings ordinaunce.

The fourth statute to purchase ever to here,
And stirren folke to love, and beten fire
On Venus auter, here about and there
And preach to them of love and hote desire,
And tell how love will quiten well their hire :
This must be kept, and loth me to displease :
If love be wroth, passe : for thereby is ease.

The fifth statute, not to be daungerous,
If that a thought would reve me of my slepe :
Nor of a sight to be over squemous,
And so verely this statute was to kepe,

To turne and wallow in my bed and wepe,
Whan that my lady of her cruelty
Would from her herte exilen all pity.

The sixt statute, it was for me to use,
Alone to wander, void of company,
And on my ladies beauty for to muse,
And to thinke it no force to live or die,
And eft againe to thinke the remedie,
How to her grace I might anone attaine,
And tell my wo unto my souveraine.

The seventh statute, was to be patient,
Whether my lady joyfull were or wroth,
For words glad or heavy, diligent,
Wheder that she me helden lefe or loth :
And hereupon I put was to mine oth,
Her for to serve, and lowly to obey,
In shewing her my chere ye twenty sithe aday.

The eighth statute to my remembraunce,
Was to spoken and pray my lady dere,
With hourelly labour and great entendaunce,
Me for to love with all her herte entere,
And me desire and make me joyfull chere,
Right as she is surmounting every faire,
Of beauty well and gentle debonaire.

The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence how that I and all,
Should ever dread to be to overbold
Her to displease, and truely so I shall,
But ben content for thinge that may fall,
And meekely take her chastisement, and yerd,
And to offend her ever ben aferd.

The tenth statute, was egally to discerne,
Betwene the lady and thine ability,
And thinke thy selfe art never like to yerne,
By right her mercy nor her equity,
But of her grace and womanly pity :
For though thy selfe be noble in thy strene,
A thousand fold more noble is thy quene.

Thy lives lady and thy souveraine,
That hath thine herte al hole in governaunce,
Thou mayst no wise it taken to disdaine,
To put thee humbly at her ordinaunce,
And give her free the reine of her plesaunce,
For liberty is thing that women looke,
And truly els the matter is a crooke.

The eleventh statute, thy signs for to know
With eye and finger, and with smiles soft,
And low to couch, and alway for to show,
For drede of spies, for to winken oft :
And secretly to bring up a sigh aloft,
But still beware of overmuch resort,
For that paraventure spileth all thy sport.

The twelfth statute remember to observe :
For all the paine thou hast for love and wo,
All is too lite her mercy to deserve,
Thou musten think, wherever thou ride or go :
And mortall wounds suffer thou also,
All for her sake, and thinke it well besette
Upon thy love, for it may not be bette.

The thirteenth statute, whilome is to thinke,
What thing may best thy lady like and please,
And in thine hertes bottome let it sinke :
Some thing devise, and take for it thine ease,

And send it her, that may her herte appease :
Some herte, or ring, or letter, or device,
Or precious stone, but spare not for no price.

The fourteenth statute eke thou shalt assay,
Formely to keepe the most part of thy life :
Wish that thy lady in thine armes lay, [wife,
And nightly dreme, thou hast thy nights hertes
Sweetly in armes, straining her as blife :
And whan thou seest it is but fantasie,
See that thou sing not over merely.

For too much joy hath oft a wofull end,
It longeth eke this statute for to hold,
To deme thy lady ever more thy friend,
And thinke thy selfe in no wise a cokold.
In every thing she doth but as she should :
Construe the best, beleeeve no tales new,
For many a lye is told, that seemeth full trew.

But thinke that she, so bounteous and faire,
Coud not be false : imagine this algate,
And think that tonges wicked would her appaire,
Sclander her name and worshipfull estate,
And lovers true to setten at debate :
And though thou seest a faunt right at thine eye,
Excuse it blive, and glose it pretily.

The fifteenth statute, use to swere and stare,
And counterfeit a lesing hardely,
To save thy ladies honour every where,
And put thy selfe for her to fight boldely :
Say she is good, vertuous, and ghostly,
Clere of entent, and herte, yea, thought and will,
And argue not for reason ne for skill.

Againe thy ladies pleasure ne entent :
For love will not be countrepleted indede :
Say as she saith, than shalt thou not be shent,
The crow is white, ye truly so I rede :
And aye what thing that she thee will forbede,
Eschew all that, and give her soveraintee,
Her appetite followe in all degree.

The sixteenth statute keepe it if thou may,
Seven sithe at night thy lady for to please,
And seven at midnight, seven at morrow day,
And drinke a caudle earely for thine ease.
Do this and keep thine head from all disease,
And win the garland here of lovers all,
That ever came in court, or ever shall.

Full few, think I, this statute hold and keep :
But truely this my reason giveth me fele,
That some lovers should rather fall asleepe,
Than take on hand to please so oft and wele.
There lay none oth to this statute adele,
But keep who might, as gave him his corage
Now get this garland lusty folke of age :

Now win who may ye lusty folke of youth,
This garland fresh, of floures red and white,
Purple and blew, and colours full uncouth,
And I shall croune him king of all delite,
In all the court there was not to my sight,
A lover true, that he ne was adrede,
Whan he expresse hath heard the statute rede.

The seventeenth statute, whan age approcheth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is queint,
As freshly than thou shalt begin to fonne
And dote in love, and all her image paint

In thy remembraunce, till thou begin to faint,
As in the first season thine herte began :
And her desire, though thou ne may ne can

Performe thy living actuell, and lust,
Register this in thine remembraunce :
Eke whan thou maist not keep thy thing from rust,
Yet speake and talke of pleasaunt daliaunce,
For that shall make thine herte rejoyce and daunce,
And whan thou maist no more the game assay,
The statute bid thee pray for them that may.

The eighteenth statute, holy to commend,
To please thy lady, is that thou eschew
With sluttishnesse thy selfe for to offend,
Be jollife, fresh, and fete, with thinges new,
Courtly with manner, this is all thy due,
Gentill of port, and loving cleannesse,
This is the thing, that liketh thy maistresse.

And not to wander liche a dulled asse,
Ragged and torne, disguised in array,
Ribaud in speech, or out of measure passe,
Thy bound exceeding, thinke on this alway :
For women been of tender hertes aye,
And lightly set their pleasure in a place,
Whan they misthinke, they lightly let it passe.

The nineteenth statute, meat and drinke forgete :
Ech other day, see that thou fast for love,
For in the court, they live withouten mete,
Save such as cometh from Venus all above,
They take none hede, in pain of great reprove
Of meat and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
Onely they live by sight of their souveraine.

The twentieth statute, last of everichone,
Enroll it in thyne hertes privitee ;
To wring and waile, to turne, and sigh and grone,
Whan that thy lady absent is from thee,
And eke renew the words all that she
Between you twain hath said, and all the chere
That thee hath made, thy lives lady dere.

And see thine herte in quiet, ne in rest
Sojourne, till time thou seene thy lady eft,
But where she wonne, by south, or east, or west,
With all thy force, now see it be not left :
Be diligent, till time thy life be raft,
In that thou mayest, thy lady for to see,
This statute was of old antiquitee.

An officer of high authority,
Cleped Rigour, made us to swere anone :
He n'as corrupt with partiality,
Favour, prayer, ne gold that clerely shone ;
“Ye shall” (quod he) “now sweren here echone,
Yong and old, to kepe in that they may
The statutes truly, all after this day.”

O God thought I, hard is to make this othe :
But to my power shall I them observe,
In all this world n'as matter halfe so lothe,
To sweare for all : for though my body sterve,
I have no might them hole to observe.
But herken now the case how it befell,
After my oth was made, the troth to tell.

I tourned leaves, looking on this booke,
Where other statutes were of women shene,
And right forthwith Rigour on me gan looke
Full angrily, and sayed unto the queene

I traitour was, and charged me let been,
“There may no man” (quod he) “the statute know,
That long to women, hie degree ne low.

“ In secret wise they kepten been full close,
They soun e chone to liberty, my friend,
Pleasaunt they be, and to their owne purpose,
There wote no wight of them, but God and fiend,
Ne naught shall wite, unto the worlds end.
The queen hath yeve me charge in pain to die
Never to rede ne seene them with mine eie.

“ For men shall not so nere of counsaile bene
With womanhood, ne knowen of her guise,
Ne what they think, ne of their wit thengine,
I me report to Salomon the wise,
And mighty Sampson, which beguiled thrise
With Dalida was, he wote that in a throw,
There may no man statute of women know.

“ For it peraventure may right so befall,
That they be bound by nature to deceive,
And spinne, and weep, and sugre strew on gall,
The herte of man to ravish and to reive, [gleve,
And whet their tongue as sharpe as swerde or
It may betide, this is their ordinance,
So must they lowly doen their observaunce.

“ And keepe the statute yeven them of kind,
Of such as love hath yeve hem in their life.
Men may not wete why turneth every wind,
Nor waxen wise, nor been inquisitive
To know secret of maid, widow, or wife,
For they their statutes have to them reserved,
And never man to know them hath deserved.

“Now dresse you forth, the god of love you guide”
(Quod Rigour than) “and seek the temple bright
Of Cithera, goddesse here beside,
Beseech her by influence and might
Of all her vertue, you to teach aright,
How for to serve your ladies, and to please
Ye that been sped, and set your herte in ease.

“And ye that ben unpurveyed, pray her eke
Comfort you soone with grace and destiny,
That ye may set your herte there ye may like,
In such a place, that it to love may be
Honour and worship, and felicity
To you for aye, now goeth by one assent.”
“Graunt mercy sir” (quod we) and forth we went

“Devoutly soft and easie pace to see
Venus the goddesse image all of gold :
And there we found a thousand on their knee,
Some fresh and faire, some deadly to behold,
In sundry mantils new and some were old,
Some painted were with flames red as fire,
Outward to show their inward hote desire.

With dolefull chere, ful fell in their complaint,
Cried “Lady Venus, rew upon our sore,
Receive our bils, with teares all bedreint,
We may not weepe, there is no more in store
But wo and pain, us fretteth more and more :
Thou blisseful planet, lovers sterre so shene,
Have routh on us, that sigh and carefull bene.

“And punish lady grevously we pray,
The false untrue, with counterfeit pleasaunce :
That made their oth, be true to live or dey,
With chere assured, and with countenance :

And falsely now they footen loves daunce,
Barraine of routh, untrue of that they saied,
Now that their lust and pleasure is alaied.”

Yet eft againe a thousand million
Rejoycing love, leading their life in blisse,
They sayd “ Venus, redresse of all division,
Goddesse eternell, thy name yhired is:
By loves bond is knit all thing ywis,
Beast unto beast, the yearth to water wan,
Bird unto bird and woman unto man,

“ This is the life of joy that we ben in,
Resembling life of heavenly paradise,
Love is exiler aye of vice and sinne,
Love maketh hertes lusty to devise,
Honour and grace, have they in every wise,
That been to loves law obedient,
Love maketh folke benigne and diligent.

“ Aye stering them to drede vice and shame:
In their degree, it maketh them honourable,
And sweet it is of love to beare the name,
So that his love be faithfull, true and stable:
Love pruneth him, to semen amiable,
Love hath no faute, there it is exercised,
But sole with them that have all love dispised.

“ Honour to thee celestiall and clere
Goddesse of love, and to thy celsitude,
That yevest us light so fer down from thy spere,
Piercing our hertes with thy pulcritude,
Comparison none of similitude
May to thy grace be made in no degree,
That hast us set with love in unitie.

“Great cause have we to praise thy name and thee,
For thorough thee we live in joy and blisse.
Blessed be thou, most souveraine to see,
Thy holy court of gladnesse may not misse :
A thousand sithe we may rejoyce in this,
That we ben thine with herte and all yfere,
Enflamed with thy grace, and heavenly fere.”

Musing of tho that spaken in this wise,
I me bethought in my remembraunce
Mine orizon right goodly to devise,
And pleasantly with hertes obeisaunce,
Beseech the goddesse voiden my grevaunce,
For I loved eke, saufe that I wist not where,
Yet downe I set and said as ye shall here.

“Fairest of all, that ever were or bee,
Licour and light, to pensife creature,
Mine hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
My goddesse bright, my fortune and my ure,
I yeve and yeeld my herte to thee full sure,
Humbly beseeching lady of thy grace
Me to bestow now in some blessed place.

“And here I vow me, faithful, true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilitie,
Humbly to serve, while I have wit and mind,
Mine hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
In thilke place, there ye me signe to be :
And sith this thing of new is yeve me aye
To love and serve, needly must I obey.

“Be merciable with thy fire of grace,
And fix mine herte, there beauty is and routh :
For hote I love, determine in no place,
Saufe onely this, by God and by my trouth

Troubled I was, with slumber, slepe, and slouth
This other night, and in a visioun
I see a woman romen up and doun,

“ Of meane stature, and semely to behold,
Lustie and fresh, demure of countenaunce,
Yong and well shape, with hair shone as gold,
With eyen as cristal, forced with pleasaunce,
And she gan stirre mine herte a lite to daunce :
But suddainly she vanish gan right there,
Thus I may say, I love and wote not where.

“ For what she is, ne her dwelling I n’ot,
And yet I fele that love distreineth me :
Might iche her know, her would I faine God wot
Serve and obey with all benignitie,
And if that other be my destinie,
So that no wise I shall her never see,
Than graunt me her that best may liken me.

“ With glad rejoyce to live in parfite hele,
Devoid of wrath, repent or variaunce :
And able me to doe that may be wele
Unto my lady, with hertes hie pleasaunce :
And mighty goddes through thy purveiaunce
My wit, my thoght, my lust and love so guide,
That to thine honour I may me provide

“ To set mine herte in place there I may like,
And gladly serve with all affection,
Great is the paine, which at mine herte doth sticke,
Till I be sped by thine election :
Helpe lady goddesse, that possession
I might of her have, that in all my life
I clepen shall my quene, and hertes wife.

“ And in the Court of Love to dwell for aye
My will it is, and done thee sacrifice :
Daily with Diane eke to fight and fraye,
And holden werre, as might will me suffice :
That goddesse chast, I keepen in no wise
To serve, a figge for all her chastity,
Her law is for religiousity.”

And thus gan finish prayer, laud, and preise,
Which that I yove to Venus on my knee,
And in mine herte to ponder and to peise,
I gave anone her image fresh beautie :
“ Heile to that figure sweet, and heile to thee
Cupide” (quod I) and rose and yede my wey,
And in the temple as I yede, I sey

A shrine surmounting all in stones rich,
Of which the force was pleasaunce to mine ey,
With diamond or saphire, never liche
I have none secne, ne wrought so wonderly :
So whan I met with Philobone in hie,
I gan demaund, who is this sepulture,
“ Forsooth” (quod she) “ a tender creature

“ Is shrined there, and Pity is her name,
She saw an egle wreke him on a flie,
And pluck his wing, and eke him in his game,
And tender herte of that hath made her die :
Eke she would weep, and mourn right pitously
To seene a lover suffer great distresse,
In all the court n’as none, as I do gesse,

“ That coud a lover halfe so well availe,
Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
Asken, for he was sure withouten faile,
That of his greef she coud the heat assuage

In steed of Pity, speedeth hote courage
The matters all of court, now she is dead,
I me report in this to womanhead.

“ For weil and weep, and cry, and speak, and
pray,

Women would not have pity on thy plaint,
Ne by that mean, to ease thine herte convay,
But thee receiven for their owne talent :
And say that Pity causeth thee in consent
Of reuth to take thy service and thy paine,
In that thou maist, to please thy souveraine.

“ But this is counsaile, keepe it secretly,”
(Quod she) “ I n’old for all the world about,
Tho queene of love it wist, and wite ye why,
For if by me this matter springen out,
In court no lenger should I out of dout
Dwellen, but shame in all my life endry,
Now keepe it close” (quod she) “ this hardely.

“ Well all is well now shall ye seen,” she said
“ The fairest lady under Sunne that is :
Come on with me, demean you lich a maid,
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speak ywis
With her that is the mirrour joy and blisse :
But somewhat strange and sad of her demean
She is, beware your countenaunce be seen,

“ Nor over light, ne rechelesse, ne too bold,
Ne malapert, ne renning with your tong,
For she will you obeisen and behold,
And you demand why ye were hence so long
Out of this court, without resort among :
And Rosiall her name is hote aright,
Whose herte as yet is yeven to no wight.

“ And ye also been, as I understand,
With love but light avanced, by your word,
Might ye by hap your freedom maken bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wele accord,
Well might ye thank the god of love and lord,
For she that ye saw in your dreame appere,
To love such one, what are ye than the nere,

“ Yet wote ye what, as my remembraunce
Me yeveth now, ye faine where that ye say,
That ye with love had never acquaintaunce,
Save in your dream right late this other day :
Why yes parde, my life that durst I lay,
That ye were caught upon an heath, whan I
Saw you complain, and sigh full pitously.

“ Within an herber, and a gardein faire
Where flowers grow, and herbes vertuous,
Of which the savour swete was and the aire,
There were your self full hote and amorous :
Ywis ye been too nice and daungerous,
I would ye now repent, and love some new,”
“ Nay by my trouth,” I said “ I never knew

“ The goodly wight, whose I shall be for aye :
Guide me the lord, that love hath made and me.”
But forth we went into a chamber gay,
There was Rosiall, womanly to see,
Whose streames, sotell piercing of her eye,
Mine herte gan thrill for beauty in the stound,
“ Alas” (quod I) “ who hath me yeve this wound.”

And than I drede to speake, till at the last
I grete the lady reverently and wele,
Whan that my sigh was gone and overpast,
Than doun on knees ful humbly gan I knele,

Beseeching her my fervent wo to kele,
For there I tooke full purpose in my mind
Unto her grace, my painfull herte to bind.

For if I shall all fully her discribe,
Her head was round, by compasse of nature,
Her haire as gold, she passed all on live,
And lilly forehed had this creature,
With liveliche browes, flaw of colour pure,
Betwene the which was meane disceveraunce
From every brow, to shew a due distaunce.

Her nose directed streight, and even as line,
With forme and shape thereto convenient,
In which the goddes milk white path doth shine,
And eke her eyen ben bright and orient,
As is the smaragde, unto my judgement,
Or yet these sterres Heavenly small and bright,
Her visage is of lovely rede and white.

Her mouth is short, and slit in little space,
Flaming somedeale, not over redde I mean,
With pregnant lips, and thick to kisse percase,
For lippes thinne not fat, but ever lene,
They serve of naught, they be not worth a bean,
For if the basse been full, there is delite,
Maximian truly thus doth he write.

But to my purpose, I say white as snow
Been all her teeth, and in order they stond
Of one stature, and eke her breath I trow
Sumounteth all odours that ever I found
In sweetnesse, and her body, face, and hond
Been sharpely slender, so that from the head
Unto the foot, all is but womanhead.

I hold my peace, of other thinges hidde.
Here shall my soule, and not my tong bewray.
But how she was arraied, if ye me bidde.
That shall I well discover you and say.
A bend of gold and silke, full fresh and gay.
With her intresse, broudered full wele.
Right smoothly kept, and shining everydele.

About her necke a flower of fresh devise,
With rubies set, that lusty were to sene,
And she in gown was light and summer wise,
Shapen full wele, the colour was of grene,
With aureat sent about her sides clene,
With divers stones, precious and rich,
Thus was she rayed, yet saw I never her lich.

For if that Jove had but this lady seine,
Tho Calixto ne yet Alcmenia,
They never hadden in his armes leine,
Ne he had loved the faire Europa,
Ye ne yet Dane ne Antiopa,
For all their beauty stood in Rosiall,
She seemed lich a thing celestiallyl.

In bounty, favour, port, and seemelinesse,
Pleasaunt of figure, mirrour of delite,
Gracious to seene, and root of all gentilnesse,
With angell visage, lusty redde and white:
There was not lack, saufe daunger had alite
This goodly fresh in rule and governaunce,
And somdele strange she was for her pleasaunce.

And truly sone I took my leave and went,
Whan she had me enquired what I was,
For more and more impressen gan the dent
Of Loves dart, while I beheld her face,

And eft againe I come to seeken grace,
And up I put my bill, with sentence clere,
That followeth after, rede and ye shall here.

“ O ye fresh, of beauty the root,
That nature hath formed so wele and made
Princes and quene, and ye that may do boot
Of all my langour, with your words glad,
Ye wounded me, ye made me wo bestad,
Of grace redresse my mortall greefe, as ye
Of all my harme the very causer be.

“ Now am I caught, and unware suddainly
With persaunt streames of your eye so clere,
Subject to been, and serven you mekely,
And all your man, ywis my lady dere,
Abiding grace, of which I you requere,
That mercillesse ye cause me not to sterve,
But guerdon me, liche as I may deserve.

“ For by my troth, all the days of my breath
I am and will be your in will and herte,
Patient and meeke, for you to suffer death
If it require, now rue upon my smart,
And this I swere, I never shall out start
From Loves Court for none adversitie,
So ye would rue on my distresse and me.

“ My desteny, my fate, and houre I blisse,
That have me set to been obedient
Onely to you, the floure of all ywis,
I trust to Venus never to repent,
For ever redy, glad and diligent,
Ye shall me find in service to your grace,
Till death my life out of my body race.

“ Humble unto your excellence so digne,
Enforcing aye my wits and delite
To serve and please with glad herte and benigne,
And been as Troylus Troyes knight,
Or Antonie for Cleopatre bright,
And never you me thinkes to renay,
This shall I keepe unto mine ending day.

“ Enprint my speech in your memoriall
Sadly my princes, salve of all my sore,
And think, that for I would becommen thrall,
And been your owne, as I have sayd before,
Ye must of pity cherish more and more
Your man, and tender after his desert,
And give him courage for to been expert.

“ For where that one hath set his herte on fire,
And findeth neither refute ne pleasaunce,
Ne word of comfort, death will quite his hire,
Alas that there is none allegeaunce
Of all their wo, alas the great grevaunce
To love unloved, but ye my lady dere,
In other wise may governe this matere.”

“ Truly gramercy friend of your good will,
And of your profer in your humble wise,
But for your service, take and keep it still,
And where ye say, I ought you well to cherise,
And of your greefe the remedy devise,
I know not why: I n'am acquainted well
With you, ne wot not sothly where ye dwell.”

“ In art of love I write, and songes make,
That may be song in honour of the king
And quene of love, and than I undertake,
He that is sadde, shall than full merry sing,

And dangerous not ben in every thing
Beseech I you, but seene my will and rede,
And let your answere put me out of drede."

"What is your name, rehearse it here I pray,
Of whence and where, of what condition
That ye been of, let see come off and say,
Faine would I know your disposition
Ye have put on your old entention,
But what ye mean to serve me I ne wote,
Saufe that ye say ye love me wonder hote."

"My name, alas, my herte why makes thou
Philogenet I calld am fer and nere, [straunge,
Of Cambridge clerk, that never think to chaunge
Fro you that with your heavenly stremes clere
Ravish mine herte and ghost, and all infere,
Since at the first I write my bill for grace,
Me thinke I see some mercy in your face.

"And what I mene, by gods that all hath wrought,
My bill now maketh finall mention,
That ye been lady in my inward thought
Of all mine herte withouten offencion,
That I best love, and sith I begon
To draw to court, lo than what might I say,
I yeeld me here unto your nobley.

"And if that I offend, or wilfully
By pomp of herte your precept disobay,
Or done againe your will unskilfully,
Or greven you for earnest or for play,
Correct ye me right sharply than I pray,
As it is seene unto your womanhede,
And rew on me, or els I n'am but dede."

“ Nay God forbede to fesse you so with grace,
And for a word of sugred eloquence,
To have compassion in so little space,
Than were it time that some of us were hens,
Ye shall not find in me such insolence :
Eye what is this, may ye not suffre sight,
How may ye looke upon the candle light ?

‘ That clerer is and hotter than mine eie,
And yet ye sayd the beames perse and frete,
How shall ye than the candle light endrie,
For well wote ye, that hath the sharper hete,
And there ye bid me, you correct and bete,
If ye offend, nay that may not be done,
There come but few, that speden here so sone.

“ Withdraw youreie, withdraw from presenseke :
Hurt not your selfe, through foly with a look,
I would be sorry so to make you sicke,
A woman should beware eke whom she took :
Ye beth a clerke, go serchen well my book,
If any women ben so light to winne,
Nay bide a while, tho ye were all my kinne.

“ So sone ye may not win mine herte in truth,
The guise of court will seen your stedfastnesse :
And as you done to have upon your reuth,
Your owne desert, and lowly gentilnesse,
That will reward you joy for heavinesse,
And tho ye waxen pale, and grene and dede,
Ye must it use a while withouten drede,

“ And it accept and grutchen in no wise,
But where as ye me heartely desire
To lene to love, me thinke ye be not wise,
Cease of your language, cease I you require,

For he that hath this twenty yeare ben here,
May not obtaine, than marvaile I that ye
Be now so bold of love to treat with me."

" Ah mercy herte, my lady and my love,
My rightwise priucesse and my lives guide,
Now may I plaine to Venus all above,
That ruthlesse ye me gave this wound so wide
What have I done, why may it not betide,
That for my trowth I may received be :
Alas than, your daunger and your cruelte.

" In wofull houre, I got was welaway,
In woful houre fostred and yfedde,
In wofull houre yborne, that I ne may
My supplication sweetly have I spedde,
The frosty grave and cold must be my bedde,
Without ye list your grace and mercy shewe,
Death with his axe so fast on me doth hewe.

" So great disease and in so littell while,
So littell joy that felte I never yet,
And at my wo Fortune ginneth to smile,
That never earst I felt so hard a fit :
Confouden ben my spirites and my wit,
Till that my lady take me to her cure,
Which I love best of erthly creature.

" But that I like, that may I not come by,
Of that I plain, that have I habondaunce,
Sorrow and thought they sit me wonder nie,
Me is withhold that might be my pleasance :
Yet turne againe my worldly suffisaunce,
O lady bright, and saufe your faithfull true,
And or I die yet ones upon me rewe."

With that I fell in sound and dede as stone,
With colour slaine and wanne as asshe pale,
And by the hand she caught me up anon,
“ Arise,” (quod she) “ what have ye dronken
Why slepen ye it is no nightertale :” [dwale.
“ Now mercy sweete,” (quod I) “ ywis affraied :”
“ What thing,” (quod she) “ hath made you so
dismaied.

“ Now wote I well that ye a lover be,
Your hew is witnesse in this thing,” she said :
“ If ye were secret, ye might know,” (quod she)
“ Curteis and kind, all this shuld be alaid :
And now mine herte, al that I have missaid,
I shall amend and set your herte in ease.”
“ That word it is,” (quod I) “ that doth me please.”

“ But this I charge, that ye the stents keepe,
And breke them not for slouth nor ignoraunce.”
With that she gan to smile and laughen depe,
“ Ywis,” (quod I) “ I will do your pleasaunce :
The sixteenth statute doth me great grevaunce,
But ye must that release or modifie.”
“ I graunt,” (quod she) “ and so I will truly.”

And softly than her colour gan appere,
As rose so red throughout her visage all,
Wherefore me thinke it is according here,
That she of right be cleped Rosiall :
Thus have I won with wordes great and small
Some goodly worde of her, that I love best,
And trust she shall yet sette mine herte in rest.

“ GOTH on,” she said to Philobone, “ and take
This man with you, and lede him all about
Within the court, and shewe him for my sake

What lovers dwell within, and all the rout
Of officers him shew, for he is out of dout
A straunger yet:—"Come on," (quod Philobone)
"Philogenet with me now must ye gen."

And stalkyng soft with easie pace, I saw,
About the kyng stonden all environ,
Attendaunce, Diligence, and their fellow
Fortherer, Asperaunce, and many one,
Dred to offend, there stood, and not alone,
For there was eke the cruell adversair,
The lovers foe that cleped is Dispair.

Which unto me spake angrely and fell,
And said, "My lady me disceive ne shall:
Trowest thou," (quod she) "that all that she did
Is true, nay nay, but under hony gall, [tell.
Thy birth and hers they be nothing egall:
Cast of thine herte, for all her words white,
For in good faith she loveth thee but a lite.

"And eke remembre thine habilite,
May not compare with her, this well thou wot:"
Ye then came Hope and said, "My frend let be.
Beleve him not: Dispaire he ginneth dote,"
"Alas," (quod I) "here is both cold and hote:
The one me biddeth love, the toder nay,
Thus wote I not what me is best to say.

"But well wote I, my lady graunted me,
Truly to be my woundes remedie,
Her gentilness may not infected be
With doublenesse, thus trust I till I die,"
So cast I to voide Dispaire's company,
And taken Hope to counceel and to friend.
"Yea keep that well," (quod Philobone) "in
mind."

And there beside within a bay window,
Stod one in grene ful large of brede and length,
His beard as black as fethers of the crow,
His name was Lust of wonder might and strength,
And with Delite to argue there he think'th,
For this was all his opinion,
That love was sinne: and so he hath begon

To reason fast, and ledge auctoritie:
“ Nay,” (quod Delite) “ love is a vertue clere,
And from the soule his progresse holdeth he:
Blind appetite of lust doth often sterc,
And that is sinne: for reason lacketh there,
For thou dost think thy neighbours wife to win:
Yet thinke it well that love may not be sinne.

“ For God, and seint, they love right verely,
Void of all sinne and vice this know I well,
Affection of flesh is sin truly,
But verray love is vertue as I fele,
For love may thy freill desire ackele:
Fer verray love is love, withouten sinne:”
“ Now stint,” (quod Lust) “ thou speket not
worth a pinne.”

And there I left them in their arguing,
Roming ferther in the castell wide,
And in a corner Lier stode talking,
Of lesings fast, with Flattery there beside,
He said that woman were attire of pride,
And men were found of nature variaunt,
And could be false and shewen beau semblaunt.

Than Flattery bespake and said, ywis
See so she goth on patens faire and fete,
It doth right well: what prety man is this,

That rometh here, now truly drink ne mete
Nede I not have, mine herte for joy doth bete
Him to behold, so is he goodly freshe :
It semeth for love his herte is tender and neshe.

This is the court of lusty folke and glad,
And well becommeth their abite and array,
O why be some so sory and so sad,
Complaining thus in blacke and white and gray,
Freres they ben, and monkes in good fay :
Alas for routh great dole it is to seene,
To see them thus bewaile and sory been.

See how they cry and wring their handes white,
For they so sone went to religion,
And eke the nonnes with vayle and wimple plight,
Their thought is, they ben in confusion :
“ Alas,” they sain “ we fain perfection,
In clothes wide and lacke our libertie,
But all the sinne mote on our frends be.

“ For Venus wote, we wold as faine as ye,
That bene attired here and welbesene,
Desiren man and love in our degre,
Ferm and faithful right as wold the quene :
Our frends wicke in tender youth and grene,
Ayenst our will made us religious,
That is the cause we mourn and wailen thus.”

Than said the monk and freres in the tide,
“ Wel may we curse our abbes and our place,
Our statutes sharpe to sing in copes wide,
Chastely to keepe us out of loves grace,
And never to fele comfort ne solace :
Yet suffre we the heate of loves fire,
And after that some other haply we desire.

“O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore
Hast thou,” they said, “berafte us libertie,
Sithe nature yave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovers be?
Why mote we suffer such adversite,
Diane to serve, and Venus to refuse,
Ful often sithe this matters doth us muse!

“We serve and honour sore ayenst our will,
Of chastite the goddes and the queene,
Us leefor were with Venus biden still,
And have reward for love and soget bene
Unto these women courtly, fresh, and shene,
Fortune we curse thy wheele of variance,
There we were well thou revest our plesance.”

Thus leave I them with voice of plaint and care,
In raging wo crying full pitously,
And as I yede full naked and full bare,
Some I behold looking dispitously,
On poverty that dedly cast their eye,
And “Welaway,” they cried, and were not faine,
For they ne might their glad desire attaine.

For lacke of richesse worldly and good,
They banne and curse, and weep, and sain, “Alas,
That poverty hath us hent that whilom stood
At hertes ease, and free and in good case,
But now we dare not shew our self in place,
Ne us embold to dwell in company,
There as our herte wold love right faithfully.”

And yet againward shrieked every nonne,
The pange of love so straineth them to crie:
“Now wothe time,” (quod they) “that we be boun
This hatefull ordre nise will done us die,

We sighe and sobbe, and bleden inwardly,
Freting ourself with thought and hard complaint,
That nie for love we waxen wood and faint."

And as I stood beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort full languishing,
Savage and wild, of loking and of chere,
Their mantelles and their clothes ay tering,
And oft they were of nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind I understand.

They lacked shape, and beauty to preferre
Themselves in love: and said that God and kind,
Hath forged them to worshipping the sterre,
Venus the bright, and lesten all behind,
His other werkes clene and out of mind:
"For other have their full shape and beauty,
And we," (quod they) been in deformity."

And nie to them there was a company,
That have the susters warried and missaide,
I meane the three of fatal destiny,
That be our workers: sodenly abraide
Out gan they cry as they had been affraide,
"We curse," (quod they) "that ever hath nature,
Yformed us this wofull life to endure."

And there eke was Contrite and gan repent,
Confessing hole the wound that Cithere
Hath with the darte of hote desire him sent,
And how that he to love must subject be,
Than held he all his skornes vanity,
And said that lovers held a blisful life,
Yong men and old, and widow, maid and wife.

“Bereve me goddesse,” (quod he) “of thy might
My skornes all and skoffes, that I have
No power for to moken any wight,
That in thy service dwell: for I did rave:
This know I well right now so god me save,
And I shal be the chief post of thy faith,
And love uphold, the revers who so saith.”

Dissemble stode not ferre from him in troth,
With party mantil party hode and hose,
And said he had upon his lady routh,
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose
Of his entent ful double I suppose,
In all the world he said he loved her wele,
But ay me thought he loved her nere a dele.

Eke Shamfastnesse was there as I tooke hede,
That blushed rede, and durst nat ben aknow
She lover was, for thereof had she drede,
She stode and hing her visage downe alow,
But such a sight it was to seene I trow,
As of these roses rody on their stalke,
There coud no wight her spy to speak or talk.

In loves art so gan she to abashe,
Ne durst not utter al her previty:
Many a stripe and many a grevous lashe
She gaven to them that wolden lovers be,
And hindered sore the simple comonalty,
That in no wise durst grace and mercy crave,
For were not she they need but ask and have,

Where if they now aprochen for to speke,
Than Shamefastnesse returneth them again:
They thinke, if we our secrets counsel breke,
Our ladies wil have scorn on us certain,

And peradventure thinken great disdain :
Thus Shamefastnesse may bringen in Dispeire,
Whan she is dede the toder will be heire.

Come forth a Vaunter, now I ring thy bel,
I spied him sone, to God I make a vowe,
He loked blacke as fendes doth in Hell,
“The first,” (quod he) “that ever I did wowe,
Within a worde she come, I wotte not how,
So that in armes was my lady free,
And so hath ben a thousand mo than she.

“In England, Britain, Spain, and Picardy,
Artois, and Fraunce, and up in hie Holand,
In Burgoine, Naples, and Italy,
Naverne, and Grece, and up in hethen lond
Was never woman yet that wold withstond,
To ben at [my] commaundement whan I wold,
I lacked neither silver, coigne, ne gold.

“And there I met with this estate and that,
And her I broched, her, and her I trow :
Lo there goeth one of mine, and wotte ye what?
You fresh attired have I laid full low,
And such one yonder eke right well I know :
I kept the statute whan we lay yfere, [chere.”
And yet you same hath made me right good

Thus hath a Vaunter blowen every where,
Al that he knoweth, and more a thousand fold,
His auncestry of kinne was to Liere,
For first he maketh promise for to hold
His ladies counceel, and it not unfold,
Wherfore the secret whan he doth unshutte,
Than lieth he, that all the world may witte.

For falsing so his promise and behest,
I wounder sore he hath such fantasie,
He lacketh wit I trow or is a beast,
That can no bet himself with reason gie,
By mine advise, love shall be contrary
To his availe, and him eke dishonour,
So that in court he shall no more sojour.

“Take heed,” (quod she) this little Philobone,
“Where Envy rocketh in the corner yond,
And sitteth dirke, and ye shall see anone
His leane body, fading both face and hond,
Himselfe he fretteth, as I understond,
Witnesse of Ovid methamorphosose,
The lovers fo he is, I will not glose.

“For where a lover thinketh him promote,
Envy will grutch, repining at his wele,
It swelleth sore about his hertes rote,
That in no wise he cannot live in hele,
And if the faithful to his lady stele,
Envy will noise and ring it round about,
And sey much worse than done is out of dout.”

And Privy Thought rejoysing of himselfe,
Stood not ferre thence in abite marvellous,
“Yon is,” (thought I) “some spirit or some elfe,
His subtill image is so curious:
How is,” (quod I) “that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I n’ot of what colour?”
And nere I went and gan to lere and pore.

And framed him a question full hard,
“What is,” (quod I) “the thing thou lovest best,
Or what is bote unto thy paines hard,
Me thinke thou livest here in great unrest,

Thou wandrest aye from south to east and west,
And east to north as ferre as I can see,
There is no place in court may holden thee.

“Whom followest thou where is thy herte yset,
But my demanda asoile I thee require.”

“Me thought,” (quod he) “no creature may let
Me to ben here, and where as I desire :
For where as absence hath done out the fire,
My mery thought it kindeleth yet againe,
That bodely me thinke with my souveraine

“I stand and speake, and laugh, and kisse, and
halse :

So that my thought comforteth me ful oft,
I think god wote, though al the world be false,
I will be true, I thinke also how soft
My lady is in speach, and this on loft
Bringeth min herte with joy and great gladnes,
This privy thought alayeth mine heavines.

“And what I thinke or where to be, no man
In all this Earth can tell ywis but I :
And eke there n’is no swallow swift, ne swan
So wight of wing, ne half so yerne can flie,
For I can bene and that right sodenly,
In Heven, in Hell, in Paradise, and here,
And with my lady whan I will desire.

“I am of counsell, ferre and wide I wote,
With lorde and lady, and their privite,
I wotte it all, and be it colde or hote,
They shall not speake without licence of me,
I mine in soch as seasonable be,
The first the thing is thought within the hart,
Ere any word out from the mouth astart.

And with the word Thought bad farewell and yede :
Eke forth went I to seene the courts guise,
And at the doore came in so God me spede,
Twenty courteours of age and of assise
Liche high, and brode, and as I me advise,
The Golden Love, and Leden Love they hight,
The tone was sad, the toder glad and light.

“ Yes draw your herte with all your force and
To lustinesse and ben as ye have seid, [might,
And thinke that I no drope of favour hight,
Ne never had unto your desire obeid,
Till sodenly me thought me was affraied,
To seene you waxe so dede of countenaunce,
And Pite bade me done you some pleasaunce.

“ Out of her shrine she rose from death to live,
And in mine eare full prively she spake,
‘ Doth not your servaunt hens away to drive,
Rosial,’ (quod she) ‘ and than mine herte it brake,
For tenderiche : and where I found moch lacke,
In your person, than I my selfe bethought,
And saide, this is the man mine hearte hath
sought.”

“ Gramercy Pity, might I but suffise,
To yeve due laude unto thy shrine of gold,
God wotte I would : for sith that thou did rise
From death to live for me, I am behold,
To thanken you a thousand times told,
And eke my lady Rosial the shene,
Which hath in comfort set mine herte ywene.

“ And here I make mine protestacion,
And depely swere as mine power to bene
Faithful, devoide of variacion,
And her forbearc in anger or in tenc,

And serviceable to my worldes quene,
With al my reason and intelligence,
To done her honour high and reverence."

I had not spoke so sone the worde, but she,
My souveraine, did thanke me hertely,
And said, " Abide ye shall dwell still with me,
Till season come of May, for than truly,
The king of love and all his company,
Shall hold his feste full rially and well,"
And there I bode till that the season fell.

ON May day whan the larke began to rise,
To matens went the lusty nightingale,
Within a temple shapen hauthorn wise,
He might not slepe in all the nightertale,
But "*Domine labia*," gan he cry and gale,
" My lippes open lord of love I cry,
And let my mouth thy preising now bewry."

The egle sang "*Venite* bodies all,
And let us joy to love that is our health,"
And to the deske anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he preesed in by stealth:
Than sayd the faucon our own hertes wealth,
"*Domine Dominus noster* I wote,
Ye be the God that done us brenne thus hote."

" *Calì enarrant*," said the popingay,
" Your might is told in Heaven and firmanent,"
And than came in the gold-finch freshe and gay,
And said this psalme with hertily glad intent
"*Domini est terra*," this laten intent,
The God of love hath yerth in governaunce:
And than the wren gan skippen and to daunce.

“ *Jube Domino* O lord of love, I pray
Commaund me well this lesson for to rede,
This legende is of all that woulden dey
Martires for love, God yet the souls spede :
And to thee Venus sing we out of drede,
By influence of all thy vertue great,
Bescechyng thee to keepe us in our heat.”

The second lesson robin redebrest sang,
“ Haile to the god and goddes of our lay,”
And to the lectorne amorously he sprong,
“ Haile now,” (quode eke) “ O fresh season of May,
Our moneth glad that singen on the spray,
“ Haile to the floures, rede, and white, and blewe,
Which by their vertue maketh our lust new.”

The third lesson the turtil dove toke up,
And thereat lough the mavis in a scorne,
He said, “ O God, as mote I dine or suppe,
This folish dove will give us al an horne,
There ben right here a thousand better borne,
To rede this lesson, which as well as he,
And eke as hote, can love in all degree.”

The turtil dove said, “ Welcom, welcom May,
Gladsom and light to lovers that ben trew :
I thanke thee lord of love that doth purvey,
For me to rede this lesson al of dewe,
For in good soth of corage I pursue,
To serve my make till death us must depart,”
And than “ *Tu autem*” sang he all apart.

“ *Te deum amoris*” sang the throstel cocke,
Tuball himselfe the first musician
With key of armony coude not onlocke,
So swete tewne as that the throstel can :

“The lord of love we praysen,” (quod he) than,
 And so done al the foules great and lite,
 “Honour we May, in fals lovers dispite.”

“*Dominus regnavit*,” said the peccocke there,
 The lord of love that mighty prince ywis,
 He is received here and every where :
Now Jubilate sing :”—“What meaneth this ?”
 Said than the linet ; “welcome lord of blisse :”
 Out sterte the owle with “*Benedicite*,”
 “What meaneth all this mery fare” (quod he.)

“*Laudate*,” sang the larke with voice ful shril,
 And eke the kight “*O admirabile*,
 This quere wil thorow mine ears pers and thril,
 But what, welcome this May season,” (quod he)
 “And honour to the lord of love mote be,
 That hath this feste so solempne and so hie,”
 “*Amen*,” said al, and so said eke the pie.

And forth the cockow gan procede anon,
 With “*Benedictus*” thanking God in hast,
 That in this May would visite them echon,
 And gladden them all while the feast shal last :
 And therewithal a laughter out he brast,
 “I thanke it God that I should end the song,
 And all the service which hath ben so long.”

Thus sang they all the service of the feste,
 And that was done right erly to my dome,
 And forth goth all the court both most and leste,
 To fetch the floures fresh, and braunch and blome,
 And namely hauthorn brought both page and
 grome

With fresh garlants party blew and white,
 And than rejoysen in their great delite.

Eke ech at other threw the floures bright,
To primerose, the violete, and the gold,
So than as I beheld the royall sight,
My lady gan me sodenly behold,
And with a trewe love plited many a fold :
She smote me through the very heart as blive,
And Venus yet I thanke I am alive.

EXPLICIT.



CHAUCER'S DREAM.

FIRST PRINTED IN SPEGHT'S EDITION, 1597.

THAT WHICH HERETOFORE HATH GONE UNDER THE NAME
OF HIS DREAM, IS THE BOOK OF THE DUTCHESS ; OR THE
DEATH OF BLANCH, DUTCHESS OF LANCASTER.

This Dream, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt the king's son, with Blanch the daughter of Henry duke of Lancaster, who, after long love, (during the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be dead) were in the end by consent of friends happily married : figured by a bird bringing in her bill an herb which restored them to life again. Here also is shewed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who, although she was a stranger, was notwithstanding so well liked and loved of the lady Blanch and her lord, as Chaucer himself also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them.*

WHAN Flora the queene of pleasaunce,
Had whole achieved thobeisaunce
Of the fresh and new season,
Thorow out every region,
And with her mantle whole covert
That winter made had discover,
Of aventure withoute light,
In May I lay upon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the lord that her wrought,
Couth well entaile in imagery
And shewed had great maistry,

* All this, says Tyrwhitt, is a mere fancy, but there is no ground for doubting the authenticity of the poem.

Whan he in so little space
Made such a body and a face,
So great beaute with swiche features
More than in other creatures,
And in my thoughtes as I lay
In a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forest,
Where after hunting I tooke rest,
Nature and kind so in me wrought,
That halfe on sleepe they me brought,
And gan to dreame to my thinking,
With mind of knowliche like making,
For what I dreamed as me thought
I saw it, and I slept nought,
Wherefore is yet my full beleewe,
That some good spirit that eve,
By meane of some curious port,
Bare me, where I saw paine and sport,
But whether it were I woke or slept,
Well wot I of, I lough and wept,
Wherefore I woll in remembraunce,
Put whole the paine, and the pleasaunce,
Which was to me axen and hele,
Would God ye wist it every dele,
Or at the least, ye might o night
Of such another have a sight,
Although it were to you a paine,
Yet on the morow ye would be faine,
And wish it might longe dure,
Than might ye say ye had good cure,
For he that dreames, and wenes he sec,
Much the better yet may hee
Wite what, and of whom, and where,
And eke the lasse it woll hindere,

To thinke I see this with mine eene,
Ywis this may not dreame kene,
But signe or signifaunce,
Of hasty thing souning pleasaunce,
For on this wise upon a night,
As ye have heard without light,
Not all waking, ne full on sleepe
About such houre as lovers weepe,
And cry after their ladies grace,
Befell me this wonder cace,
Which ye shall heare and all the wise,
So wholly as I can devise,
In plaine English evill written,
For sleepe writer well ye witten,
Excused is, though he do mis,
More than one that waking is,
Wherefore here of your gentillesse,
I you require my boistousnesse
Ye let passe, as thinge rude
And heareth what I woll conclude,
And of the enditing taketh no heed,
Ne of the tearmes so God you speed,
But let all passe as nothing were,
For thus befell, as you shall here.

Within an yle me thought I was,
Where wall, and yate was all of glasse,
And so was closed round about,
That leavelesse none come in ne out,
Uncouth and straunge to behold,
For every yate of fine gold,
A thousand fanes, aie turning,
Entuned had, and briddes singing,
Divers, and on each fane a paire,
With open mouth again thaire,

And of a sute were all the toures,
Subtily corven after floures,
Of uncouth colours during aye,
That never been none seene in May,
With many a small turret hie,
But man on live could I non sie,
Ne creatures, save ladies play,
Which were such of their array,
That as me thought of goodlihead,
They passeden all, and womanhead,
For to behold them daunce and sing,
It seemed like none earthly thing,
Such was their uncouth countinaunce,
In every play of right usaunce,
And of one age everichone,
They seemed all save onely one,
Which had of yeeres suffisaunce,
For she might neither sing ne daunce,
But yet her countenaunce was so glad,
And she so fewe yeeres had had,
As any lady that was there
And as little it did her dere,
Of lustines to laugh and tale
As she had full stuffed a male
Of disports and new playes :
Faire had she been in her daies,
And maistresse seemed well to be,
Of all that lusty companie,
And so she might I you ensure
For one the conningest creature
She was, and so said everichone,
That ever her knew, there failed none,
For she was sober, and well avised,
And from every fault disguised,

And nothing used but faith and truth,
That she n'as young it was great ruth,
For every where and in ech place,
She governed her, that in grace
She stode alway with poore and riche,
That at a word was none her liche,
Ne halfe so able maistres to be,
To such a lusty companie.

Befell me so, when I avised
Had, the yle that me suffised,
And whole the state every where,
That in that lusty yle was there,
Which was more wonder to devise,
Than the joieux paradise,
I dare well say, for floure ne tree,
Ne thing wherein pleasaunce might bee,
There failed none, for every wight,
Had they desired, day and night,
Riches, heale, beauty, and case,
With every thing that them might please,
Thinke and have, it cost no more,
In such a country there before,
Had I not bene ne heard tell,
That lives creature might dwell.
And when I had thus all about,
The yle avised throughout,
The state, and how they were arayed,
In my heart I were well payed,
And in my selfe I me assured,
That in my body I was well ured,
Sith I might have such a grace,
To see the ladies and the place,
Which were so faire I you ensure,
That to my dome though that nature,

Would ever strive and do her paine,
She should not con ne mow attaine,
The least feature to amend,
Though she would all her conning spend,
That to beauty might availe,
It were but paine and lost travaile,
Such part in their nativity,
Was them alarged of beauty,
And eke they had a thing notable,
Unto their death, ay durable,
And was, that their beauty should dure,
Which was never seene in creature,
Save onely there (as I trow)
It hath not be wist ne know,
Wherefore I praise with their conning,
That during beauty, rich thing,
Had they been of their lives certaine,
They had been quite of every paine,
And when I wende thus all have seene,
The state, the riches, that might beene,
That me thought impossible were,
To see one thing more than was there,
That to beauty or glad conning,
Serve or availe might any thing.

All sodainly as I there stood,
This lady that couth so much good,
Unto me came with smiling chere,
And said “ *Benedicite*, this yere
Saw I never man here but you,
Tell me how ye come hider now?
And your name, and where ye dwell?
And whom ye seeke eke mote ye tell,
And how ye come be to this place,
The soth well told may cause you grace,

And else ye mote prisoner be,
Unto the ladies here, and me,
That have the governaunce of this yle :”
And with that word she gan to smile,
And so did all the lusty rout
Of ladies that stood her about.
“Madame,” (quod I) “this night past,
Lodged I was and slept fast,
In a forest beside a well,
And now am here, how should I tell,
Wot I not, by whose ordinance,
But onely Fortunes purveiance,
Which puts many as I gesse,
To travaile, paine, and businesse,
And lettes nothing for their truth,
But some sleeth eke, and that is ruth,
Wherefore I doubt her brittilnes,
Her variance and unsteadfastnes,
So that I am as yet afraid,
And of my being here amaid,
For wonder thing seemeth me,
Thus many fresh ladies to see,
So faire, so cunning, and so yong,
And no man dwelling them among :
N’ot I not how I hider come,
Madame,” (quod I) “this all and some,
What should I faine a long processe
To you that seeme such a princesse,
What please you commaund or say,
Here I am you to obay,
To my power, and all fulfill,
And prisoner bide at your will,
Till you duly enformed be,
Of every thing ye aske me.”

This lady there right well apaid,
Me by the hand tooke, and said,
“Welcome prisoner adventurous,
Right glad am I ye have said thus,
And for ye doubt me to displease,
I will assay to do you ease :”
And with that word, ye anon,
She, and the ladies everichon
Assembled, and to counsaile went,
And after that soone for me sent,
And to me said on this manere,
Word for word, as ye shall here.

“To see you here us thinke marvaile,
And how without bote or saile,
By any subtilty or wyle,
Ye get have entre in this yle,
But not for that, yet shall ye see,
That we gentill women bee,
Loth to displease any wight,
Notwithstanding our great right,
And for ye shall well understond
The old custome of this lond,
Which hath continued many yere,
Ye shall well wete that with us here
Ye may not bide, for causes twaine,
Which we be purposed you to saine.

“Th’one is this, our ordinance,
Which is of long continuance,
Woll not, sothly we you tell,
That no man here among us dwell,
Wherefore ye mote needs retourne,
In no wise may you here sojourne.

“Th’other is eke, that our queene
Out of the realme, as ye may seene,

Is, and may be to us a charge,
If we let you goe here at large,
For which cause the more we doubt,
To doe a fault while she is out,
Or suffer that may be noysaunce,
Againe our old accustomaunce."

And whan I had these causes twaine
Heard, O God what a paine
All sodainly about mine herte,
There came at ones and how smart,
In creeping soft as who should steale,
Or doe me robbe of all mine heale,
And made me in my thought so fraid,
That in courage I stode dismaid.
And standing thus, as was my grace,
A lady came more than apace,
With huge prease her about,
And told how the queene without
Was arived and would come in,
Well were they that thider might twin,
They lied so they would not abide,
The bridling their horse to ride,
By five, by sixe, by two, by three,
There was not one abode with me,
The queene to meet everichone,
They went, and bode with me not one,
And I after a soft pase,
Imagining how to purchase
Grace of the queene, there to bide,
Till good fortune some happy guide
Me send might, that would me bring
Where I was borne to my wonning,
For way ne foot knew I none,
Ne witherward I n'ist to gone,

For all was sea about the yle,
No wonder though me list not smile,
Seeing the case uncouth and straunge,
And so in like a perilous chaunge,
Imagining thus walking alone,
I saw the ladies everichone,
So that I might somewhat offer,
Sone after that I drew me nere,
And tho I was ware of the queene,
And how the ladies on their kneene,
With joyous words, gladly advised,
Her welcomed so that it suffised,
Though she princes hole had be,
Of all environed is with see :
And thus avising, with chere sad,
All sodainly I was glad,
That greater joy as mote I thrive,
I trow had never man on live,
Than I tho, ne heart more light,
Whan of my lady I had sight,
Which with the queene come was there,
And in one clothing both they were,
A knight also there well beseene,
I saw that come was with the queene,
Of whome the ladies of that yle
Had huge wonder longe while,
Till at the last right soberly,
The queene her selfe full cunningly,
With soft words in good wise,
Said to the ladies young and nise,
“ My sisters how it hath befall,
I trow ye know it one and all,
That of long time here have I beene,
Within this yle bidding as queene,

Living at ease, that never wight
More parfit joy have ne might,
And to you been of governance,
Such as you found in whole pleasance,
In every thing as ye know,
After our custome and our low,
Which how they first found were,
I trow ye wote all the manere,
And who queene is of this yle,
As I have been long while,
Ech seven yeeres not of usage,
Visit the heavenly armitage,
Which on a rocke so high stonds,
In strange sea out from all londs,
That to make the pilgrimage
Is called a long perillous viage,
For if the wind be not good frend,
The journey dures to the end
Of him that it undertakes,
Of twenty thousand one not scapes,
Upon which rock growth a tree,
That certaine yeeres beares apples three,
Which three apples who may have,
Been from all displeasaunce save,
That in the seven yeere may fall,
This wote you well one and all,
For the first apple and the hext,
Which growth unto you next,
Hath three vertues notable,
And keepeth youth aie durable,
Beauty and looke, ever in one,
And is the best in everichone,
“ The second apple red and grene,
Onely with lookes of your yene,

You nourishes in pleasaunce,
Better than partridge or fesaunce,
And feeds every lives wight
Pleasantly with the sight.

“The third apple of the three,
Which groweth lowest on the tree,
Who it beares may not faile
That to his pleasaunce may availe,
So your pleasure and beauty rich,
Your during youth ever liche,
Your truth, your cunning, and your weale,
Hath aye floured, and your good heale,
Without sicknes or displeasaunce,
Or thing that to you was noysaunce,
So that you have as goddesses,
Lived above all princesses :
Now is befall as ye may see,
To gather these said apples three,
I have not failed againe the day,
Thitherward to take the way,
Wening to speed as I had oft,
But whan I come, I find aloft
My sister which that here stands,
Having those apples in her hands,
Avising them and nothing said,
But looked as she were well paid :
And as I stood her to behold,
Thinking how my joyes were cold,
Sith I those apples have ne might,
Even with that so came this knight,
And in his armes of me aware,
Me tooke, and to his ship me bare,
And said, though him I never had seen,
Yet had I long his lady been,

Wherefore I should with him wend,
And he would to his lives end
My servaunt be, and gan to sing
As one that had wounne a rich thing,
Tho were my spirits fro me gone,
So sodainly everichone,
That in me appeared but death,
For I felt neither life ne breath,
Ne good ne harme none I knew,
The sodaine paine me was so new,
That had not the hasty grace be
Of this lady, that fro the tree
Of her gentilnesse so hied
Me to comfort, I had died,
And of her three apples, one
In mine hand there put anone,
Which brought againe mind and breath,
And me recovered from the death,
Wherefore to her so am I hold,
That for her all things do I wold,
For she was lech of all my smart,
And from great paine so quite mine hart,
And as God wote, right as ye heare,
Me to comfort with friendly cheare,
She did her prowessse and her might,
And truly eke so did this knight,
In that he couth, and oft said,
That of my wo he was ill paid,
And cursed the ship that them there brought,
The mast, the master that it wrought,
And as ech thing mote have an end,
My sister here your brother frend,
Con with her words so womanly
This knight entreat, and conningly,

For mine honour and his also,
And said that with her we should go
Both in her ship, where she was brought,
Which was so wonderfully wrought,
So cleane, so rich, and so araid,
That we were both content and paid,
And me to comfort and to please,
And mine herte to put at ease,
She toke great paine in little while,
And thus hath brought us to this yle,
As ye may see, wherfore echone,
I pray you thanke her one and one,
As heartily as ye can devise,
Or imagine in any wise,"
At once there tho men might seen
A world of ladies fall on kneen
Before my lady that there about
Was left none standing in the rout,
But altogither they went at ones
To kneele, they spared not for the stones,
Ne for estate, ne for their blood,
Well shewed there they couth much good,
For to my lady they made such feast,
With such words, that the least,
So friendly and so faithfully
Said was, and so cunningly,
That wonder was seing their youth,
To here the language they couth,
And wholly how they governed were,
In thanking of my lady there,
And said by will and maundement,
They were at her commaundement,
Which was to me as great a joy,
As winning of the towne of Troy

Was to the hardy Greekes strong,
Whan they it wan with siege long,
To see my lady in such a place,
So received as she was,
And whan they talked had a while
Of this and that, and of the yle,
My lady, and the ladies there,
Altogether as they were,
The queene her selfe began to play,
And to the aged lady say :
“ Now seemeth you not good it were,
Sith we be altogether here,
To ordaine and devise the best,
To set this knight and me at rest,
For woman is a feble wight,
To rere a warre against a knight,
And sith he here is in this place,
At my list, danger, or grace,
It were to me great villany,
To do him any tyranny,
But faine I would, now will ye here,
In his owne country that he were,
And I in peace, and he at ease,
This were a way us both to please,
If it might be, I you beseech,
With him hereof you fall in speech.”
This lady tho began to smile,
Avising her a little while,
And with glad chere she said anone,
“ Madam I will unto him gone,
And with him speake, and of him fele
What he desires every dele :”
And soberly this lady tho,
Her selfe and other ladies two

She tooke with her, and with sad chere,
Said to the knight on this manere,
“Sir, the princes of this yle,
Whom for your pleasance many mile,
Ye sought have, as I understand,
Till at the last ye have her foud,
Me sent hath here, and ladies twaine,
To heare all thing that ye saine,
And for what cause ye have her sought,
Faine would she wote, and whol your thought,
And why you do her all this wo,
And for what cause you be her fo,
And why of every wight unware,
By force ye to your ship her bare,
That she so nigh was agone,
That mind ne speech had she none,
But as a painfull creature,
Dying, abode her adventure,
That her to see indure that paine,
Here well say unto you plaine,
Right on your selfe ye did amisse,
Seing how she a princes is.”
This knight the which couth his good,
Right of his truth meved his blood,
That pale he woxe as any lead,
And lookt as he would be dead,
Blood was there none in nother cheke,
Worldlesse he was and semed sicke,
And so it proved well he was,
For without moving any paas,
All sodainely as thing dying,
He fell at once downe sowning,
That for his wo, this lady fraid,
Unto the queene her hied and said,

“ Cometh on anon as have you blisse,
But ye be wise, thing is amisse,
This knight is dead or will be soone,
Lo where he lyeth in a swoone,
Without word, or answering
To that I have said, any thing :
Wherefore I doubt, that the blame,
Might be hindering to your name,
Which floured hath so many yere,
So long, that for nothing here,
I would in no wise he died,
Wherefore good were that ye hied,
His life to save at the least,
And after that his wo be ceast,
Commaund him void, or dwell,
For in no wise dare I more mell
Of thing wherein such perill is,
As like is now to fall of this.”
This queene right tho full of great feare,
With all the ladies present there,
Unto the knight came where he lay,
And made a lady to him say :
“ Lo here the queene, awake for shame,
What will you doc, is this good game ?
Why lye you here, what is your mind ?
Now is well seene your wit is blind,
To see so many ladies here,
And ye to make none other chere,
But as ye set them all at nought,
Arise, for his love that you bought :”
But what she said, a word not one
He spake, ne answer gave her none.
The queene of very pittty tho,
Her worship, and his like also,

To save there she did her paine,
And quoke for feare, and gan to saine
For woe, "Alas what shall I doe,
What shall I say this man unto,
If he die here, lost is my name,
How shal I play this perillous game?
If any thing be here amisse,
It shall be said, it rigour is,
Whereby my name impayre might,
And like to die eke is this knight:"
And with that word her hand she laid
Upon his brest, and to him said,
"Awake my knight, lo it am I
That to you speake, now tell me why
Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
Seing ye be in country sure,
Among such friends that would you heale,
Your hertes ease eke and your weale,
And if I wist what you might ease,
Or know the thing that you might please,
I you ensure it should not faile,
That to your heale you might availe:
Wherefore with all my herte I pray
Ye rise, and let us talke and play,
And see how many ladies here,
Be comen for to make good chere."
All was for nought, for still as stone,
He lay, and word spoke none,
Long while was or he might braid,
And of all that the queene had said,
He wist no word but at the last,
"Mercy," twise he cried fast,
That pitty was his voice to heare,
Or to behold his painefull cheare,

Which was not fained well was to sein,
Both by his visage and his eyn,
Which on the queene at once he cast,
And sighed as he would to brast,
And after that he shrigh so,
That wonder was to see his wo,
For sith that paine was first named,
Was never more wofull paine attained,
For with voice dead he gan to plaine,
And to himselfe these words saine,
“ I wofull wight full of malure,
Am worse than dead, and yet dure,
Maugre any paine or death,
Against my will I fell my breath :
Why n'am I dead sith I ne serve,
And sith my lady will me sterve,
Where art thou Death art thou agast,
Well shall we meete yet at the last,
Though thou thee hide it is for nought,
For where thou dwelst thou shalt be sought.
Maugre thy subtill double face,
Here will I die right in this place,
To thy dishonour and mine ease,
Thy manner is no wight to please,
What needs thee sith I thee seeche,
So thee to hide my paine to eche,
And well wost thou I will not live,
Who would me all this world here give,
For I have with my cowardise,
Lost joy, and heale, and my servise,
And made my soveraigne lady so,
That while she lives I trow my fo
She will be ever to her end,
Thus have I neither joy ne frend,

Wote I not whether hast or sloth,
Hath caused this now by my troth,
For at the hermitage full hie,
Whan I her saw first with mine eye,
I hied till I was aloft,
And made my pace small and soft,
Till in mine armes I had her fast,
And to my ship bare at the last,
Whereof she was displeased so,
That endlesse there seemed her wo,
And I thereof had so great fere,
That me repent that I come there,
Which hast I trow gan her displease,
And is the cause of my disease :”
And with that word he gan to cry,
“ Now Death, Death,” twy or thry,
And motred wot I not what of slouth,
And even with that the queene of routh,
Him in her armes tooke and said,
“ Now mine owne knight be not evill apaid.
That I a lady to you sent,
To have knowledge of your entent,
For in good faith I meant but well,
And would ye wist it every dele,
Nor will not do to you ywis,”
And with that word she gan him kisse,
And prayed him rise, and said she would
His welfare by her truth, and told
Him how she was for his disease
Right sorry, and faine would him please.
His life to save : these words tho,
She said to him and many mo,
In comforting, for from the paine,
She would he were delivered faine,

The knight tho up cast his een,
And whan he saw it was the queen,
That to him had these words said,
Right in his wo he gan to braid,
And him up dresses for to knele,
The queene avising wonder wele :
But as he rose he overthrew,
Wherefore the queene, yet eft anew
Him in her armes anon tooke,
And pitiously gan on him looke,
But for all that nothing she said,
Ne spake not like she were well paid,
Ne no chere made, nor sad, ne light,
But all in one to every wight,
There was seene, conning, with estate,
In her without noise or debate,
For save onely a looke piteous,
Of womanhead undispiteous,
That she showed in countenance,
For seemed her herte from obeisance,
And not for that she did her reine,
Him to recure from the peine,
And his herte to put at large,
For her entent was to his barge
Him to bring against the eve,
With certaine ladies and take leve,
And pray him of his gentilnesse,
To suffer her thenceforth in peace,
As other princes had before,
And from thenceforth for evermore,
She would him worship in all wise,
That gentilnesse might devise,
And paine her wholly to fulfill,
In honour, his pleasure and will.

And during thus this knights wo,
Present the queene and other mo,
My lady and many another wight,
Ten thousand ships at a sight,
I saw come over the wawy flood,
With saile and ore, that as I stood
Them to behold, I gan marvaile,
From whom might come so many a saile,
For sith the time that I was bore,
Such a navy there before,
Had I not seene, ne so arayed,
That for the sight my herte played
To and fro within my brest,
For joy, long was or it would rest,
For there was sailes full of floures,
After castels with huge toures,
Seeming full of armes bright,
That wonder lusty was the sight,
With large toppes, and mastes long,
Richly depeint and rear among,
At certaine times gan repaire
Small birds downe from th'aire,
And on the ships bounds about,
Sate and song with voice full out,
Ballades and layes right joyously,
As they couth in their harmony,
That you to write that I there see,
Mine excuse is it may not be,
For why, the matter were to long
To name the birds and write their song,
Whereof anon the tidings there
Unto the queene soone brought were,
With many alas, and many a doubt,
Shewing the ships there without,

Tho gan the aged lady weepe,
And said " Alas our joy on sleepe
Soone shall be brought, ye long or night,
For we discried been by this knight,
For certes it may none other be,
But he is of yond companie,
And they be come him here to secche,"
And with that word her failed speche,
" Without remedy we be destroid,"
Full oft said all, and gan conclude,
Holy at once at the last,
That best was, shut their yates fast,
And arme them all in good langage,
As they had done of old usage,
And of faire wordes make their shot,
This was their counsaile and the knot,
And other purpose tooke they none,
But armed thus forth they gone
Toward the walles of the yle,
But or they come there long while,
They met the great lord of bove,
That called is the god of love,
That them avised with such chere,
Right as he with them angry were,
Availed them not their walls of glasse,
This mighty lord let not to passe,
The shutting of their yates fast,
All they had ordaind was but wast,
For whan his ships had found land,
This lord anon with bow in hand,
Into this yle with huge prease,
Hied fast and would not cease,
Till he came there the knight lay,
Of queene ne lady by the way,

Tooke he no heed but forth past,
And yet all followed at the last,
And whan he came where lay the knight,
Well shewed he, he had great might,
And forth the queene called anone,
And all the ladies everichone,
And to them said, “ Is not thus routh,
To see my servaunt for his trowth,
Thus leane, thus sicke, and in this paine,
And wot not unto whom to plaine,
Save onely one without mo,
Which might him heale and is his fo,
And with that word, his heavy brow
He shewed the queene and looked row,
This mighty lord forth tho anone,
With o looke her faults echone
He can her shew in little speech,
Commaunding her to be his leech,
Withouten more shortly to say
He thought the queene soone should obey,
And in his hond he shoke his bow,
And said right soone he would be know,
And for she had so long refused
His service, and his lawes not used,
He let her wit that he was wroth,
And bent his bow and forth he goth
A pace or two, and even there
A large draught, up to his care
He drew, and with an arrow ground
Sharpe and new, the queene a wound
He gave, that pierced unto the herte,
Which afterward full sore gan smart,
And was not whole of many yeare,
And even with that “ Be of good cheare,

My knight," quod he, " I will thee hele,
And thee restore to parfite wele,
And for each paine thou hast endured,
To have two joys thou art cured,"
And forth he past by the rout,
With sober cheare walking about,
And what he said I thought to heare,
Well wist he which his servaunts were,
And as he passed anon he fond
My lady and her tooke by the hond,
And made her chere as a goddes,
And of Beaute called her princes,
Of bounte eke gave her the name,
And said there was nothing blame
In her, but she was vertuous,
Saying she would no pity use,
Which was the cause that he her sought,
To put that far out of her thought,
And sith she had whole richesse
Of womanhead, and friendlinesse,
He said it was nothing fitting,
To void pity his owne legging,
And gan her preach and with her play,
And of her beauty told her aie,
And said she was a creature,
Of whom the name should endure,
And in bookes full of pleasaunce
Be put for ever in remembraunce,
And as me thought more friendly
Unto my lady, and goodlely
He spake, than any that was there,
And for th' apples, I trow it were,
That she had in possession,
Wherefore long in procession,

Many a pace arme under other,
He welke, and so did with none other,
But what he would commaund or say,
Forthwith needs all must obay,
And what he desired at the lest,
Of my lady, was by request,
And whan they long together had beene,
He brought my lady to the queene,
And to her said, " So God you speed,
Shew grace, consent, that is need,"
My lady tho full conningly,
Right well avised, and womanly
Downe gan to kneele upon the floures,
Which Aprill nourished had with shoures,
And to this mighty lord gan say,
" That pleaseth you, I woll obay,
And me restraine from other thought,
As ye woll all thing shall be wrought,"
And with that word kneeling she quoke,
That mighty lord in armes her tooke,
And said " You have a servaunt one,
That truer living is there none,
Wherefore good were, seeing his trouth,
That on his paines ye had routh,
And purpose you to heare his speech,
Fully avised him to leech,
For of one thyng ye may be sure,
He will be yours, while he may dure,"
And with that word right on his game
Me thought he lough, and told my name,
Which was to me marvaile, and fere,
That what to do I n'ist there,
Ne whether was me bet or none,
There to abide, or thus to gone,

For well wend I my lady wold
Imagen, or deme, that I had told
My counsaile whole, or made complaint
Unto that lord, that mighty saint,
So verily, each thing unsought,
He said as he had knowne my thought,
And told my trouth and mine uncase,
Bet than I couth have for mine ease,
Though I had studied all a weeke,
Well wist that lord that I was seekke,
And would be leched wonder faine,
No man me blame, mine was the paine :
And when this lord had all said,
And long with my lady plaid,
She gan to smile with spirit glade,
This was the answer that she made,
Which put me there in double peine,
That what to do, ne what to seine
Wist I not, ne what was the best,
Ferre was my herte than fro his rest,
For as I thought, that smiling signe
Was token, that the herte encline
Would to requests reasonable,
Because smiling is favorable
To every thing that shall thrive,
So thought I tho anon blive,
That wordlesse answer in no touu
Was tane for obligatioun,
Ne called surety in no wise,
Amongst them that called been wise.
Thus was I in a joyous dout,
Sure and unsurest of that rout,
Right as mine herte thought it were,
So more or lesse wexe my fere,

That if one thought made it wele,
Another shent it every dele,
Till at the last I couth no more,
But purposed as I did before,
To serve truly my lives space,
Awaiting ever the yeare of grace,
Which may fall yet or I sterve,
If it please her that I serve,
And served have, and woll do ever,
For thing is none, that me is lever,
Than her service, whose presence
Mine Heaven is whole, and her absence
An Hell, full of divers paines,
Which to the death full oft me straines,
Thus in my thoughts, as I stood,
That unneth felt I harme ne good,
I saw the queene a little paas
Come where this mighty lord was,
And kneeled downe in presence there
Of all the ladies that there were,
With sober countenaunce avised,
In few words that well suffised,
And to this lord anon present
A bill, wherein whole her entent
Was written, and how she besought,
As he knew every will and thought,
That of his godhead and his grace
He would forgive all old trespase,
And undispleased be of time past,
For she would ever be stedfast,
And in his service to the death
Use every thought while she had breath,
And sight and wept, and said no more,
Within was written all the sore :

At which bill the lord gan smile,
And said he would within that yle
Be lord and sire, both east and west,
And cald it there his new conquest,
And in great counsell tooke the queene,
Long were the tales them betweene,
And over her bill he read thrise,
And wonder gladly can devise
Her features faire, and her visage,
And had good thrift on that image,
And sayd he trowed her compleint
Should after cause her be corseint,
And in his sleeve he put the bill,
Was there none that knew his will,
And forth he walke apace about,
Beholding all the lusty rout,
Halfe in a thought with smiling chere.
Till at the last, as ye shall here,
He turned unto the queene ageine,
And said, "To morne, here in this pleine.
I woll ye be, and all yours,
That purposed ben to weare flours,
Or of my lusty colour use,
It may not be to you excuse,
Ne none of yours in no wise,
That able be to my servise,
For as I said have here before,
I will be lord for evermore
Of you, and of this yle, and all,
And of all yours, that have shall
Joy, peace, ease, or in pleasaunce
Your lives use without noysaunce;
Here will I in state be seene,"
And turned his visage to the queene,

“ And you give knowledge of my will,
And a full answer of your bill,”
Was there no nay, ne words none,
But very obeisaunt seemed echone,
Queene and other that were there,
Well seemed it they had great fere,
And there tooke lodging every night,
Was none departed of that night,
And some to read old romances,
Them occupied for their pleasances,
Some to make verelaies, and laies,
And some to other diverse plaies :
And I to me a romance tooke,
And as I reading was the booke,
Me thought the sphere had so run,
That it was rising of the Sun,
And such a prees into the plaine
Assemble gone, that with great paine
One might for other go ne stand,
Ne none take other by the hand,
Withouten they distourbed were,
So huge and great the prees was there.

And after that within two houres,
This mighty lord all in floures
Of divers colours many a paire,
In his estate up in the aire,
Well two fathom, as his hight,
He set him there in all their sight,
And for the queene and for the knight,
And for my lady, and every wight,
In hast he sent, so that never one
Was there absent, but come echone :
And whan they thus assembled were,
As ye have heard me say you here,

Without more tarrying on hight,
There to be seene of every wight,
Up stood among the prees above
A counsayler, servaunt of Love,
Which seemed well, of great estate,
And shewed there, how no debate
Owe ne goodly might be used
In gentilnesse, and be excused,
Wherefore he said, his lordes will,
Was every wight there should be still,
And in pees, and one accord,
And thus commaunded at a word,
And can his tongue to swiche language
Turne, that yet in all mine age
Heard I never so conningly
Man speake, ne halfe so faithfully,
For every thing he said there,
Seemed as it insealed were,
Or approved for very trew :
Swiche was his cunning language new.
And well according to his chere,
That where I be, me thinke I here
Him yet alway, whan I mine one
In any place may be alone :
First con he of the lusty yle
All th'astate in little while
Rehearse, and wholly every thing,
That caused there his lords comming,
And every wele and every wo,
And for what cause ech thing was so,
Well shewed he there in easie speech,
And how the sicke had need of leech :
And that whole was, and in grace,
He told plainly why each thing was,

And at the last he con conclude,
Voided every language rude,
And said, " That prince, that mighty lord,
Or his departing, would accord
All the parties there present,
And was the fine of his entent,
Witnesse his presence in your sight,
Which sits among you in his might :"
And kneeled downe withouten more,
And not o word spake he more.

Tho gan this mighty lord him dresse,
With cheare avised, to do largesse,
And said unto this knight and me,
" Ye shall to joy restored be,
And for ye have ben true ye twaine,
I graunt you here for every paine
A thousand joys every weeke,
And looke ye be no lenger seeke.
And both your ladies, lo hem here,
Take ech his own, beeth of good chere,
Your happy day is new begun,
Sith it was rising of the Sun,
And to all other in this place,
I graunt wholly to stand in grace,
That serveth truely, without slouth,
And to avaunced be by trouth."
Tho can this knight, and I downe kneele,
Wening to doe wonder wele,
" Seeing O Lord your great mercy,
Us hath enriched, so openly,
That we deserve may never more,
The least part, but evermore
With soule and body truely serve
You and yours till we sterve."

And to their ladies there they stood,
This knight that couth so mikel good,
Went in hast, and I also,
Joyous, and glad were we tho,
And also rich in every thought,
As he that all hath and ought nought,
And them besought in humble wise,
Us t'accept to their service,
And shew us of their friendly cheares,
Which in their treasure many yeares,
They kept had, us to great paine,
And told how their servants twaine,
Were and would be, and so had ever,
And to the death chaunge would we never,
Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ill,
But fill their ordinance and will :
And made our othes fresh new,
Our old service to renew,
And wholly theirs for evermore,
We there become, what might we more,
And well awaiting, that in slouth,
We made ne fault, ne in our trowth,
Ne thought not do, I you ensure,
With our will, where we may dure.

This season past, againe an eve,
This lord of the queene tooke leve,
And said he would hastely returne,
And at good leisure there sojourne,
Both for his honour, and for his ease,
Commaunding fast, the knight to please,
And gave his statutes in papers,
And ordent divers officers,
And forth to ship the same night
He went, and soone was out of sight.

And on the morrow whan the aire
Attempred was, and wonder faire,
Early at rising of the Sun,
After the night away was run,
Playing us on the rivage,
My lady spake of her voyage,
And said she made small journies,
And held her in straunge countries,
And forthwith to the queene went,
And shewed her wholly her entent,
And tooke her leave with cheare weeping,
That pitty was to see that parting :
For to the queene it was a paine,
As to a martyr new yslaine,
That for her woe, and she so tender,
Yet I weepe oft whan I remember,
She offerd there to resigne,
To my lady eight times or nine,
Th'astate, the yle, shortly to tell,
If it might please her there to dwell,
And said, for ever her lineage,
Should to my lady doe homage,
And hers be hole withouten more,
Ye, and all theirs for evermore :
“ Nay God forbid,” my lady oft,
With many conning word and soft,
Seid, “ that ever such thing should beene,
That I consent should, that a queene
Of your estate, and so well named,
In any wise should be attamed :
But would be faine with all my herte,
What so befell, or how me smert,
To doe thing that you might please,
In any wise, or be your ease,”

And kissed there, and bad good night,
For which leve wept many a wight,
There might men here my lady praised,
And such a name of her araised,
What of cunning and friendlinesse,
What of beauty with gentilnesse,
What of glad and friendly cheares,
That she used in all her yeares,
That wonder was here every wight
To say well, how they did their might,
And with a prees upon the morrow,
To ship her brought, and what a sorrow
They made, whan she should under saile,
That and ye wist, ye would mervaile.
Forth goeth the ship, out goeth the sond,
And I as a wood man unbond,
For doubt to be behind there,
Into the sea withouten fere,
Anon I ran, till with a waw,
All sodenly I was overthrow,
And with the water to and fro,
Backward and forward travailed so,
That mind and breath, nigh was gone,
For good ne harme knew I none,
Til at the last with hookes tweine,
Men of the ship with mikel peine,
To save my life, did such travaile,
That and ye wist ye would mervaile,
And in the ship me drew on hie,
And saiden all that I would die,
And laid me long downe by the mast,
And of their clothes on me cast,
And there I made my testament,
And wist my selfe not what I ment,

But whan I said had what I would,
And to the mast my wo all told,
And tane my leave of every wight,
And closed mine eyen, and lost my sight,
Avised to die, without more speech,
Or any remedy to seech
Of grace new, as was great need :
My lady of my paine tooke heed,
And her bethought how that for trouth
To see me die it were great routh,
And to me came in sober wise,
And softly said, " I pray you rise,
Come on with me, let be this fare,
All shall be wel, have ye no care,
I will obey ye and fulfill
Holy in all that lords will,
That you and me not long ago,
After his list commaunded so,
That there againe no resistance
May be without great offence,
And therefore now what I say,
I am and will be friendly aye,
Rise up behold this avauntage,
I graunt you inheritance,
Peaceably without strive,
During the daies of your live,"
And of her apples in my sleve
One she put, and took her leve
In words few and said, " Good hele,
He that all made, you send and wele,"
Wherewith my paines all at ones
Tooke such leave, that all my bones,
For the new duranse pleasaunce,
So as they couth, desired to daunce,

And I as whole as any wight,
Up rose with joyous herte and light,
Hole and unsicke, right wele at case,
And all forget had my disease,
And to my lady where she plaid,
I went anone, and to her said :
“ He that all joies persons to please
First ordained with parfite ease,
And every pleasure can depart,
Send you madame, as large a part,
And of his goods such plenty,
As he has done you of beauty,
With hele and all that may be thought,
He send you all as he all wrought :
Madame” (quoth I) “ your servaunt trew,
Have I ben long, and yet will new,
Without chaunge or repentaunce,
In any wise or variaunce,
And so will do as thrive I ever,
For thing is none that me is lever
Than you to please, how ever I fare,
Mine hertes lady and my welfare,
My life, mine hele, my lech also,
Of every thing that doth me wo,
My helpe at need, and my surete
Of every joy that longs to me,
My succours whole in all wise,
That may be thought or man devise,
Your grace madame such have I found,
Now in my need that I am bound
To you for ever so Christ me save,
For heale and live of you I have,
Wherefore is reasoun I you serve,
With due obeisaunce till I sterve,

And dead and quicke be ever yours,
Late, early, and at all hours,"
Tho came my lady small alite,
And in plaine English con·consite
In words few, whole her entent
She shewed me there, and how she ment
To meward in every wise,
Wholly she came at their devise,
Without processe or long travell,
Charging me to keepe counsell,
As I would to her grace attaine,
Of which commaundement I was faine.
Wherefore I passe over at this time,
For counsell cords not well in rime,
And eke the oth that I have swore,
To breake, me were better unbore,
Why for untrue for evermore
I should be hold, that nevermore
Of me in place should be report
Thing that availe might, or comfort
To mewards in any wise,
And ech wight would me dispise
In that they couth, and me repreeve,
Which were a thing sore for to greeve,
Wherefore hereof more mencion
Make I not now ne long sermon,
But shortly thus I me excuse,
To rime a counsell I refuse.
Sailing thus two dayes or three,
My lady towards her countree,
Over the waves high and greene,
Which were large and deepe betweene,
Upon a time me called and said,
That of my hele she was well paid,

And of the queene and of the yle,
She talked with me long while,
And of all that she there had seene,
And of the state, and of the queene,
And of the ladies name by name,
Two houres or mo, this was her game,
Till at the last the wind gan rise,
And blew so fast, and in such wise,
The ship that every wight can say,
“ Madame er eve be of this day,
And God tofore, ye shall be there,
As ye would fainest that ye were,
And doubt not within sixe hours,
Ye shall be there, as all is yours,”
At which words she gan to smile,
And said that was no long while,
That they her set, and up she rose,
And all about the ship she gose,
And made good cheare to every wight,
Till of the land she had a sight,
Of which sight glad God it wote,
She was abashed and abote,
And forth goeth, shortly you to tell,
Where she accustomed was to dwell,
And received was as good right,
With joyous cheere and hertes light,
And as a glad new aventure,
Pleasaunt to every creature,
With which landing tho I woke,
And found my chamber full of smoke,
My cheekes eke unto the cares,
And all my body wet with teares,
And all so feeble and in such wise,
I was, that unneth might I rise,

So fare travailed and so faint,
That neither knew I kirke ne saint,
Ne what was what, ne who was who,
Ne avised, what way I would go,
But by a venturous grace,
I rise and walkt, sought pace and pace,
Till I a winding staire found,
And held the vice aye in my hond,
And upward softly so gan creepe,
Till I came where I thought to sleepe
More at mine ease, and out of preace,
At my good leisure, and in peace,
Till somewhat I recomfort were
Of the travell and great feare
That I endured had before,
This was my thought without more,
And as a wight witlesse and faint,
Without more, in a chamber paint
Full of stories old and divers,
More than I can now rehearse,
Unto a bed full soberly,
So as I might full sothly,
Pace after other, and nothing said,
Till at the last downe I me laid,
And as my mind would give me leve,
All that I dreamed had that eve,
Before all I can rehearse,
Right as a child at schoole his verse
Doth after that he thinketh to thrive,
Right so did I for all my live,
I thought to have in remembraunce,
Both the paine and the pleasaunce,
The dreame whole, as it me befell,
Which was as ye here me tell,

Thus in my thoughts as I lay,
That happy or unhappy day,
Wot I not so have I blame,
Of the two, which is the name :
Befell me so, that there a thought,
By processe new on sleepe me brought,
And me governed so in a while,
That againe within the yle,
Me thought I was, whereof the knight,
And of the ladies I had a sight,
And were assembled on a greene,
Knight and lady, with the queene,
At which assembly there was said,
How they all content and paid,
Were wholly as in that thing,
That the knight there should be king,
And they would all for sure witnesse
Wedded be both more and lesse,
In remembraunce without more,
Thus they consent for evermore,
And was concluded that the knight
Depart should the same night,
And forthwith there tooke his voiage,
To journey for his marriage,
And returne with such an host,
That wedded might be least and most,
This was concluded, written and sealed,
That it might not be repealed
In no wise but aie be firme,
And all should be within a tearme,
Without more excusation,
Both feast and coronation,
This knight which had thereof the charge,
Anon into a little barge,

Brought was late against an eve,
Where of all he tooke his leave,
Which barge was as a mans thought,
After his pleasure to him brought,
The queene her selfe accustomed aye
In the same barge to play,
It needeth neither mast ne rother,
I have not heard of such another,
No maister for the governaunce,
Hie sayled by thought and pleasaunce,
Without labour east and west,
All was one, calme, or tempest,
And I went with at his request,
And was the first prayed to the fest.
Whan he came in his countree,
And passed had the wavy see,
In an haven deepe and large
He left his rich and noble barge,
And to the court shortly to tell,
He went, where he wont was to dwell,
And was received as good right,
As heire, and for a worthy knight,
With all the states of the lond,
Which came anon at his first sond,
With glad spirits full of trouth,
Loth to do fault or with a slouth,
Attaint be in any wise,
Their riches was their old servise,
Which ever trew had be fond,
Sith first inhabit was the lond,
And so received there hir king,
That forgotten was no thing,
That owe to be done ne might please,
Ne their souveraine lord do ease,

And with them so shortly to say,
As they of custome had done aye,
For seven yere past was and more,
The father, the old wise and hore
King of the land tooke his leve
Of all his barons on an eve,
And told them how his dayes past
Were all, and comen was the last,
And hertily prayed hem to remember
His sonne, which yong was and tender,
That borne was their prince to be,
If he returne to that countree
Might, by adventure or grace,
Within any time or space,
And to be true and friendly aye,
As they to him had bene alway :
Thus he them prayd, without more,
And tooke his leave for evermore.
Knowen was, how tender in age,
This young prince a great viage
Uncouth and straunge, honours to seeche,
Tooke in hond with little speeche,
Which was to seeke a princes,
That he desired more than riches,
For her great name that floured so,
That in that time there was no mo
Of her estate, ne so well named,
For borne was none that ever her blamed :
Of which princes somewhat before,
Here have I spoke, and some will more.
So thus befell as ye shall heare,
Unto their lord they made such cheare,
That joy was there to be present
To see their troth and how they ment,

So very glad they were ech one,
That them among there was no one,
That desired more riches,
Than for their lord such a princes,
That they might please, and that were faire,
For fast desired they an heire,
And said great surety were ywis.
And as they were speaking of this,
The prince himselfe him avised,
And in plaine English undisguised,
Them shewed hole his journey,
And of their counsell gan them prey,
And told how he ensured was,
And how his day he might not passe,
Without diffame and great blame,
And to him for ever shame,
And of their counsell and advise,
There he prayth them once or twice,
And that they would, within ten daies,
Advise and ordaine him such waies,
So that it were no displeasaunce,
Ne to this realme over great grievance,
And that he have might to his feast,
Sixty thousand at the least,
For his intent within short while
Was to returne unto his yle
That he came fro, and kepe his day,
For nothing would he be away.
To counsaile tho the lords anon,
Into a chamber everychone,
Togither went, them to devise,
How they might best and in what wise,
Purvey for their lords pleasaunce,
And the realmes continuance

Of honor, which in it before
Had continued evermore,
So at the last they found the waies,
How within the next ten daies,
All might with paine and diligence
Be done, and cast what the dispence
Might draw, and in conclusion,
Made for ech thing provision.
Whan this was done, wholly tofore
The prince, the lords all before
Come, and shewed what they had done,
And how they couth by no reason
Find, that within the ten daies
He might depart by no waies,
But would be fifteene at the least,
Or he returne might to his feast :
And shewed him every reason why
It might not be so hastily,
As he desired, ne his day
He might not keepe by no way,
For divers causes wonder great :
Which whan he heard, in such an heat
He fell, for sorow and was seke,
Still in his bed whole that weke,
And nigh the tother for the shame,
And for the doubt, and for the blame
That might on him be aret,
And oft upon his brest he bet,
And said, " Alas, mine honour for aye,
Have I here lost cleane this day,
Dead would I be, alas my name
Shall aye be more henceforth in shame.
And I dishonoured and reprevd,
And never more shall be beleevd : "

And made swich sorow, that in trouth,
Him to behold it was great routh :
And so endured the dayes fiftene,
Till that the lords on an even
Him come, and told they ready were,
And shewed in few words there,
How and what wise they had purveyd
For his estate, and to him said,
That twenty thousand knights of name,
And fourty thousand without blame,
All come of noble lignee,
Togider in a companee,
Were lodged on a rivers side,
Him and his pleasure there t'abide,
The prince tho for joy up rose,
And where they lodged were, he goes
Without more that same night,
And these his supper made to dight,
And with them bode till it was dey,
And forthwith to take his journey,
Leving the streight, holding the large,
Till he came to his noble barge,
And when this prince, this lusty knight
With his people in armes bright,
Was comen where he thought to pas,
And knew well none abiding was
Behind, but all were there present,
Forthwith anon all his intent
He told them there, and made his cries
Through his hoste that day twise,
Commaunding every lives wight,
There being present in his sight,
To be the morow on the rivage,
Where he begin would his viage.

The morrow come, the cry was kept,
Few was there that night that slept,
But trussed and purveied for the inorrow,
For fault of ships was all their sorrow,
For save the barge, and other two,
Of ships there saw I no mo:
Thus in their doubts as they stood,
Waxing the sea, comming the flood,
Was cried, "To ship goe every wight,"
Than was but hie, that hie might,
And to the barge me thought echone
They went, without was left not one,
Horse, male, trusse, ne bagage,
Salade, speare, gard brace, ne page,
But was lodged and roome ynough,
At which shipping me thought I lough,
And gan to marvaile in my thought,
How ever such a ship was wrought,
For what people that can encrease,
Ne never so thicke might be the prease,
But all had roome at their will,
There was not one was lodged ill,
For as I trow, my selfe the last
Was one, and lodged by the mast,
And where I looked I saw such rome,
As all were lodged in a towne.
Forth goth the ship, said was the creed,
And on their knees for their good speed,
Downe kneeled every wight a while,
And praied fast that to the yle
They might come in safety,
The prince and all the company,
With worship and without blame,
Or disclaunder of his name,

Of the promise he should retourne,
Within the time he did sojourne,
In his lond biding his host,
This was their prayer of least and most,
To keepe the day it might not been,
That he appointed had with the queen,
To returne without slouth,
And so assured had his trouth,
For which fault this prince, this knight,
During the time slept not a night,
Such was his wo and his disease,
For doubt he should the queene displease.
Forth goeth the ship with such speed,
Right as the prince for his great need
Desire would after his thought,
Till it unto the yle him brought,
Where in hast upon the sand,
He and his people tooke the land,
With hertes glad, and chere light,
Weening to be in Heaven that night :
But or they passed a while,
Entring in toward that yle,
All clad in blacke with chere piteous,
A lady which never dispiteous
Had be in all her life tofore,
With sory chere, and herte to tore,
Unto this prince where he gan ride,
Come and said, " Abide, abide,
And have no hast, but fast retourne,
No reason is ye here sojourne,
For your untruth hath us discried,
Wo worth the time we us allied
With you, that are so soone untrew,
Alas the day that we you knew,

Alas the time that ye were bore,
For all this lond by you is lore,
Accursed be he you hider brought,
For all your joy is turnd to nought,
Your acquaintance we may complaine,
Which is the cause of all our paine.”
“Alas madame,” quoth tho this knight,
And with that from his horse he light,
With colour pale, and cheekes lene,
“Alas what is this for to mene,
What have ye said, why be ye wroth,
You to displease I would be loth,
Know ye not well the promesse
I made have to your princesse,
Which to perfourme is mine intent,
So mote I speed as I have ment,
And as I am her very trew,
Without change or thought new,
And also fully her servand,
As creature or man livand
May be to lady or princesse,
For she mine Heaven, and whole richesse
Is, and the lady of mine heale,
My worlds joy and all my weale,
What may this be, whence coms this speech.
Tell me madame I you beseech,
For sith the first of my living,
Was I so fearfull of nothing,
As I am now to heare you speake,
For dout I feele mine herte breake :
Say on madame, tell me your will,
The remenaunt is it good or ill,”
“Alas” (quod she) “that ye were bore,
For, for your love this land is lore,

The queene is dead and that is ruth,
For sorrow of your great untruth,
Of two partes of the lusty rout,
Of ladies that were there about,
That wont were to talke and play,
Now are dead and cleane away,
And under earth tane lodging new,
Alas that ever ye were untrew,
For whan the time ye set was past,
The queene to counsaile sone in hast,
What was to doe, and said great blame,
Your acquaintaunce cause would and shame,
And the ladies of their avise
Prayed, for need was to be wise,
In eschewing tales and songs,
That by them make would ill tongs,
And sey they were lightly conquest,
And prayed to a poore feast,
And foule had their worship weived,
Whan so unwisely they conceived,
Their rich treasour, and their heale,
Their famous name, and their weale,
To put in such an aventure,
Of which the sclander ever dure
Was like, without helpe of appele,
Wherefore they need had of counsele,
For every wight of them would say,
Their closed yle an open way
Was become to every wight,
And well apprevd by a knight,
Which he alas without paysaunce,
Had soone acheved thobeisaunce :
All this was moved at counsell thrise,
And concluded daily twise,

That bet was die without blame,
Than lose the riches of their name,
Wherefore the deaths acquaintaunce
They chese, and left have their pleasaunce,
For doubt to live as repreved,
In that they you so soone beleeved,
And made their othes with one accord,
That eat, ne drinke, ne speake word,
They should never, but ever weping
Bide in a place without parting,
And use their dayes in penaunce,
Without desire of allegeaunce,
Of which the truth anon con preve,
For why the queen forth with her leve
Toke at them all that were present,
Of her defaults fully repent,
And died there withouten more,
Thus are we lost for evermore,
What should I more hereof reherse,
Comen within come see her herse,
Where ye shall see the piteous sight,
That ever yet was shewen to knight,
For ye shall see ladies stond,
Ech with a great rod in hond,
Clad in black with visage white,
Ready each other for to smite,
If any be that will not wepe,
Or who that makes countenaunce to slepe,
They be so bet, that all so blew
They be as cloth that died is new,
Such as their parfite repentance,
And thus they kepe their ordinance,
And will do ever to the death,
While them endures any breath."

This knight tho in armes twaine,
This lady tooke and gan her saine,
“ Alas my birth, wo worth my life,”
And even with that he drew a knife,
And through gowne, doublet, and shert,
He made the blood come from his herte,
And set him downe upon the greene,
And full repent closed his eene,
And save that ones he drew his breath,
Without more thus he tooke his death.
For which cause the lusty hoast,
Which in a battaile on the coast,
At once for sorrow such a cry
Gan rere thorow the company,
That to the Heaven heard was the sowne,
And under therth als fer adowne,
That wild beasts for the feare,
So sodainly afrayed were,
That for the doubt, while they might dure,
They ran as of their lives unsure,
From the woods unto the plaine,
And from the valleys the high mountaine
They sought, and ran as beastes blind,
That cleane forgotten had their kind.
This wo not ceased, to counsaile went
These lords, and for that lady sent,
And of avise what was to done,
They her besought she say would sone,
Weeping full sore all clad in blake,
This lady softly to them spake,
And said, “ My lords by my trouth,
This mischief it is of your slouth,
And if ye had that judge would right,
A prince that were a very knight,

Ye that ben of astate echone,
Die for his fault should one and one,
And if he hold had the promesse,
And done that longs to gentilnesse,
And fulfilled the princes behest,
This hasty farme had bene a feast,
And now is unrecoverable,
And us a slaunder aye durable,
Wherefore I say as of counsaile,
In me is none that may availe,
But if ye list for remembraunce,
Purvey and make such ordinaunce,
That the queene that was so meke,
With all her women dede or seke,
Might in your land a chappell have,
With some remembraunce of her grave,
Shewing her end with the pity,
In some notable old city,
Nigh unto an high way,
Where every wight might for her pray,
And for all hers that have ben trew,"
And even with that she changed hew,
And twise wished, after the death,
And sight, and thus passed her breath.
Than said the lords of the host,
And so conclude least and most,
That they would ever in houses of thacke,
Their lives lead, and weare but blacke,
And forsake all their pleasaunces,
And turn all joy to penaunces,
And beare the dead prince to the barge,
And named them should have the charge,
And to the hearse where lay the queen,
The remenaunt went and down on kneen,

Holding their hondes on high gon crie,
“Mercy, mercy,” everich thrie,
And cursed the time that ever slouth
Should have such masterdome of trouth,
And to the barge a long mile,
They bare her forth, and in a while
All the ladies one and one,
By companies were brought echone,
And past the sea and tooke the land,
And in new herses on a sand,
Put and brought were all anon,
Unto a city closed with stone,
Where it had been used aye
The kings of the land to lay,
After they raigned in honours,
And writ was which were conquerours,
In an abbey of nunnes which were blake,
Which accustomed were to wake,
And of usage rise ech a night,
To pray for every lives wight,
And so befell as in the guise,
Ordeint and said was the servise,
Of the prince and of the queen,
So devoutly as might been,
And after that about the herses,
Many orisons and verses,
Without note full softly,
Said were and that full heartily,
That all the night till it was day
The people in the church con pray,
Unto the holy Trinity,
Of those soules to have pity.

And whan the night past and ronne
Was, and the new day begonne,

The yong morrow with rayes red,
Which from the Sunne over all con spred,
Atempered clere was and faire,
And made a time of wholsome aire,
Befell a wonder case and strange,
Among the people and gan change
Soone the word and every woo,
Unto a joy and some to two :
A bird all fedred blew and greene,
With bright rayes like gold betweene,
As small thred over every joynt,
All full of colour strange and coint,
Uncouth and wonderfull to sight,
Upon the queens herse con light,
And song full low and softly,
Three songs in her harmony,
Unletted of every wight,
Till at the last an aged knight,
Which seemed a man in great thought,
Like as he set all thing at nought,
With visage and eyen all forwept,
And pale, as man long unslept,
By the herse as he stood,
With hasty hondling of his hood,
Unto a prince that by him past,
Made the bridde somewhat agast,
Wherefore she rose and left her song,
And depart from us among,
And spread her wings for to passe
By the place he entred was,
And in his hast shortly to tell,
Him hurt, that backward downe he fell,
From a window richly peint,
With lives of many divers scint,

And bet his wings and bled fast,
And of the hurt thus died and past,
And lay there well an houre and more,
Till at the last of briddes a score,
Come and sembled at the place
Where the window broken was,
And made swiche waimentacioun,
That pity was to heare the soun,
And the warbles of their throtes,
And the complaint of their notes,
Which from joy cleane was reversed,
And of them one the glas soone persed,
And in his beke of colours nine,
An herbe he brought floureslesse all grene,
Full of small leaves and plaine,
Swart and long with many a vaine,
And where his fellow lay thus dede,
This hearbe down laid by his hede,
And dressed it full softly,
And hong his head and stood thereby,
Which hearb in lesse than halfe an houre,
Gan over all knit, and after floure
Full out and wexe ripe the seed,
And right as one another feed
Would, in his beake he tooke the graine,
And in his fellows beake certaine
It put, and thus within the third
Up stood, and pruned him the bird,
Which dead had be in all our sight,
And both together forth their flight
Tooke singing from us, and their leve,
Was none disturb hem would ne greve,
And whan they parted were and gone
Th'abbesse the seeds soone echone

Gadred had, and in her hand
The herb she tooke, well avisand
The leafe, the seed, the stalke, the floure,
And said it had a good savour,
And was no common herb to find,
And well approved of uncouth kind,
And than other more vertuouse,
Who so have it might for to use
In his need, flowre, leafe, or graine,
Of their heale might be certaine :
And laid it downe upon the herse
Where lay the queene, and gan reherse,
Echone to other that they had seene,
And taling thus the sede wex greene,
And on the dry herse gan spring,
Which me thought a wondrous thing,
And after that floure and new seed,
Of which the people all tooke heed,
And said, it was some great miracle,
Or medicine fine more than triacle,
And were well done there to assay,
If it might ease in any way,
The corses, which with torch light,
They waked had there all that night,
Soone did the lords there consent,
And all the people thereto content,
With easie words and little fare,
And made the queenes visage bare,
Which shewed was to all about,
Wherefore in swoone fell whole the rout,
And were so sory most and least,
That long of weeping they not ceast,
For of their lord the remembraunce,
Unto them was such displeasaunce,

That for to live they called a paine,
So were they very true and plaine,
And after this the good abbesse,
Of the graine gan chese and dresse,
Three, with her fingers cleane and small,
And in the queenes mouth by tale,
One after other full easily,
She put and full conningly,
Which shewed soone such vertue,
That preved was the medicine true,
For with a smiling countenaunce
The queene uprose, and of usaunce,
As she was wont to every wight,
She made good cheere, for which sight,
The people kneeling on the stones,
Thought they in Heaven were soule and bones :
And to the prince where he lay,
They went to make the same assay,
And whan the queene it understood,
And how the medicine was good,
She prayed she might have the graines,
To releve him from the paines
Which she and he had both endured,
And to him went and so him cured,
That within a little space,
Lusty and fresh on live he was,
And in good hele, and hole of speech,
And lough, and said, " Gramercy leech,"
For which the joy throughout the town,
So great was that the bells sown
Afraied the people, a journey,
About the city every way,
And come and asked cause and why
They rongen were so stately ?

And after that the queene, th'abbesse
Made diligence or they would cesse,
Such, that of ladies soone a rout,
Shewing the queene was all about,
And called by name echone and told,
Was none forgotten young ne old,
There might men see joyes new,
Whan the medicine fine and trew,
Thus restored had every wight,
So well the queene as the knight,
Unto perfit joy and hele,
That fleting they were in such wele
As folke that would in no wise,
Desire more perfit paradise.
And thus whan passed was the sorrow,
With mikel joy soone on the morrow,
The king, the queene, and every lord,
With all the ladies by one accord,
A generall assembly
Great cry through the country,
The which after as their intent
Was turned to a parliament,
Where was ordained and avised,
Every thing and devised,
That please might to most and least,
And there concluded was the feast,
Within the yle to be hold
With full consent of young and old,
In the same wise as before,
As thing should be withouten more,
And shipped and thither went
And into straunge realmes sent,
To kings, queenes, and duchesses,
To divers princes and princesses,

Of their linage and can pray,
That it might like them at that day
Of mariage, for their sport,
Come see the yle, and them disport,
Where should be jousts and turnaies,
And armes done in other waies,
Signifying over all the day
After Aprill within May,
And was avised that ladies tweine,
Of good estate and well beseine,
With certaine knights and squiers,
And of the queenes officers,
In manner of an embassade,
With certain letters closed and made,
Should take the barge and depart,
And seeke my lady every part,
Till they her found for any thing,
Both charged have queene and king,
And as their lady and maistres,
Her to beseke of gentilnes,
At the day there for to been,
And oft her recommaund the queen,
And prayes for all loves to hast,
For but she come all woll be wast,
And the feast, a businesse
Without joy or lustinesse :
And tooke them tokens and good speed
Praid God send, after their need.
Forth went the ladies and the knights,
And were out fourteene daies and nights,
And brought my lady in their barge,
And had well sped and done their charge :
Whereof the queene so hartily glad
Was that in soth such joy she had,

Whan the ship approched lond,
That she my lady on the sond
Met, and in armes so constraine,
That wonder was behold them twaine,
Which to my dome during twelve houres,
Neither for heat ne watry shoures,
Departed not no company,
Saving themselfe but none them by,
But gave them leisour at their ease,
To rehearse joy and disease,
After the pleasure and courages,
Of their young and tender ages:
And after with many a knight,
Brought were, where as for that night,
They parted not, for to pleasaunce,
Content, was herte and countenaunce,
Both of the queene, and my maistresse,
This was that night their businesse:
And on the morrow with huge rout,
This prince of lords him about,
Come and to my lady said,
That of her comming glad and well apaid
He was, and full conningly
Her thanked and full heartily,
And lough and smiled, and said ywis,
That was in doubt, in safety is:
And commaunded do diligence,
And spare for neither gold ne spence,
But make ready, for on the morow,
Wedded with saint John to borow,
He would be, withouten more,
And let them wite this lesse and more.
The morow come, and the service
Of mariage in such a wise

Said was, that with more honour,
Was never prince ne conquerour
Wedde ne with such company,
Of gentilnesse in chivalry,
Ne of ladies so great routs
Ne so besecn as all abouts
They were there, I certifie
You on my life withouten lie.

And the feast hold was in tentis,
As to tell you mine entent is,
In a rome a large plaine
Under a wood in a champaine,
Betwixt a river and a welle,
Where never had abbay, ne selle
Ben, ne kirke, house, ne village,
In time of any mans age :
And dured three months the feast,
In one estate and never ceast,
From early the rising of the Sonne,
Till the day spent was and yronne,
In justing, dauncing, and lustinesse,
And all that sowned to gentilnesse.

And as me thought the second morrow,
Whan ended was all old sorrow,
And in surety every wight
Had with his lady slept a night,
The prince, the queene, and all the rest,
Unto my lady made request,
And her besought oft and praied,
To mewards to be well apaied,
And consider mine old trouth,
And on my paines have routh,
And me accept to her servise,
In such forme and in such wise,

That we both might be as one,
Thus prayed the queene, and everichone :
And for there should be no nay,
They stint justing all a day,
To pray my lady and requere,
Be content and out of fere,
And with good herte make friendly cheare,
And said it was a happy yeare :
At which she smiled and said ywis,
“ I trow well he my servaunt is,
And would my welfare as I trist,
So would I his, and would he wist
How and I knew that his trouth
Continue would without slouth,
And be such as ye here report,
Restraining both courage and sport,
I couth consent at your request,
To be named of your fest,
And do after your usaunce,
In obeying your pleasaunce,
At your request this I consent,
To please you in your entent,
And eke the souveraine above,
Commanded hath me for to love,
And before other him prefer,
Against which prince may be no wer,
For his power over all raigneth,
That other would for nought him paineth,
And sith his will and yours is one.
Contrary in me shall be none,”
Tho (as me thought) the promise
Of marriage before the mese,
Desired was of every wight,
To be made the same night,

To put away all maner douts
Of every wight thereabouts,
And so was do, and on the morrow,
Whan every thought and every sorrow
Dislodged was out of mine herte,
With every wo and every smert,
Unto a tent prince and princes,
Me thought, brought me and my maistres,
And said we were at full age
There to conclude our marriage,
With ladies, knights, and squiers,
And a great host of ministers,
With instruments and sounes diverse,
That long were here to rehearse,
Which tent was church perochiall,
Ordaint was in especiall,
For the feast and for the sacre,
Where archbishop, and archdiacre
Song full out the servise,
After the custome and the guise,
And the churches ordinaunce,
And after that to dine and daunce
Brought were we, and to divers playes,
And for our speed ech with prayes,
And merry was most and least,
And said amended was the feast,
And were right glad lady and lord,
Of the marriage and th'accord,
And wished us hertes pleasaunce,
Joy, hele, and continuaunce,
And to the ministrils made request,
That in encreasing of the fest,
They would touch their cords,
And with some new joyeux accords,

Moove the people to gladnesse,
And praiden of all gentilnesse,
Ech to paine them for the day,
To shew his cunning and his play,
Tho began sownes mervelous,
Entuned with accords joyous,
Round about all the tents,
With thousands of instruments,
That every wight to daunce them pained,
To be merry was none that fained,
Which sowne me troubled in my sleepe,
That fro my bed forth I lepe,
Wening to be at the feast,
But whan I woke all was ceast,
For there n'as lady ne creature,
Save on the wals old portraiture
Of horsmen, haukes, and hounds,
And hurt deere full of wounds,
Some like bitten, some hurt with shot,
And as my dreame seemed that was not,
And whan I wake, and knew the trouth,
And ye had seen of very routh,
I trow ye would have wept a weke,
For never man yet halfe so seke,
I went escaped with the life,
And was for fault that sword ne knife
I find ne might my life t'abridge,
Ne thing that kerved, ne had edge,
Wherewith I might my woful pains
Have voided with bleeding of my vains,
Lo here my blisse, lo here my paine,
Which to my lady I do complaine,
And grace and mercy her requere,
To end my wo and busie fere,

And me accept to her servise,
After her service in such avise,
That of my dreame the substaunce
Might turne once to cognisaunce,
And cognisaunce to very preve,
By full consent, and good leve,
Or els without more I pray,
That this night, or it be day,
I mote unto my dreame returne,
And sleeping so forth aie sojourne
About the yle of pleasaunce,
Under my ladies obeisaunce,
In her servise, and in such wise,
As it please her may to devise,
And grace ones to be accept,
Like as I dreamed whan I slept,
And dure a thousand yeare and ten,
In her good will, amen, amen.

FAIREST of faire, and goodliest on live,
All my secret to you I plaine, and shrive,
Requiring grace and of complaint,
To be healed or martyred as a saint,
For by my trouth I sweare, and by this booke,
Ye may both heale, and slee me with a looke.

Go forth mine owne true herte innocent,
And with humblesse, do thine observaunce,
And to thy lady on thy knees present
Thy servise new, and think how great pleasance
It is to live under th'obeisance
Of her that may with her looks soft
Give thee the blisse that thou desirest oft.

Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede,
And not too wild of thy countenaunce,
But meeke and glad, and thy nature feed,
To do each thing that may her pleasance,
Whan thou shalt sleep, have aie in remembrance
Th' image of her which may with lookes soft
Give thee the blisse that thou desirest oft.

And if so be that thou her name find
Written in booke, or els upon wall,
Looke that thou as servaunt true and kind,
Thine obeisaunce as she were therewithall,
Faining in love is breeding of a fall
From the grace of her, whose lookes soft
May give the blisse that thou desirest oft.

Ye that this ballade read shall,
I pray you keepe you from the fall.



THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove, seeth a great company of knights and ladies in a daunce upon the greene grass: the which being ended, they all kneel down, and do honour to the daisie, some to the flower, and some to the leaf. Afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is this: They which honour the flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure. But they that honour the leaf, which abideth with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow vertue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects.

WHAN that Phebus his chair of gold so hie
Had whirled up the sterry sky aloft,
And in the Boole was entred certainly,
When shoures sweet of raine descended soft,
Causing the ground fele times and oft,
Up for to give many an wholesome aire,
And every plaine was clothed faire

With new greene, and maketh small floures
To springen here and there in field and in mede,
So very good and wholesome be the shoures,
That it renueth that was old and dede,
In winter time; and out of every sede
Springeth the hearbe, so that every wight
Of this season wexeth glad and light.

And I so glad of the season swete,
Was happed thus upon a certaine night,
As I lay in my bed, sleepe full unmete

Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Rest, I ne wist: for there n'as earthly wight
As I suppose had more herts ease
Than I; for I n'ad sicknesse nor disease.

Wherefore I mervaile greatly of my selfe,
That I so long withouten sleepe lay,
And up I rose thee houres after twelfe,
About the springing of the day,
And on I put my geare and mine array,
And to a pleasaunt grove I gan passe,
Long er the bright Sunne up risen was.

In which were okes great, streight as a line,
Under the which the grasse so fresh of hew,
Was newly sprong, and an eight foot or nine
Every tree well fro his fellow grew,
With branches brode, laden with leves new,
That sprongen out ayen the sunne-shene,
Some very red, and some a glad light grene.

Which as me thought was right a pleasant sight,
And eke the briddes songe for to here,
Would have rejoiced any earthly wight,
And I that couth not yet in no manere
Heare the nightingale of all the ycare,
Ful busily herkened with herte and with care,
If I her voice perceive coud any where.

And at the last a path of little brede
I found, that greatly had not used be,
For it forgrowen was with grasse and weede,
That well unneth a wighte might it se:
Thought I, this path some whider goth, parde;
And so I followed, till it me brought
To right a pleasaunt herber well ywrought,

That benched was, and with turfes new
Freshly turved, whereof the grene gras,
So small, so thicke, so short, so fresh of hew,
That most like unto green wool wot I it was :
The hegge also that yede in compas,
And closed in all the greene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere ;

Wrethen in fere so well and cunningly,
That every branch and leafe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of an height by and by,
I sie never thing I you ensure,
So well done ; for he that tooke the cure
It to make ytrow, did all his peine
To make it passe all tho that men have seine.

And shapen was this herber rooffe and all
As a prety parlour ; and also
The hegge as thicke as a castle wall,
That who that list without to stond or go,
Though he would all day prien to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no ; but one within well might

Perceive all tho that yeden there without
In the field, that was on every side
Covered with corn and grasse, that out of doubt,
Though one would seeke all the world wide,
So rich a fielde coud not be espide
On no coast, as of the quantity,
For of all good thing there was plenty.

And I that all this pleasaunt sight sie,
Thought sodainly I felt so sweet an aire
Of the eglentere, that certainly

There is no hert, I deme, in such dispaire,
Ne with thoughts froward and contraire,
So overlaid, but it should soone have bote,
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was ware of the fairest medler tree,
That ever yet in all my life I sie,
As full of blossomes as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretile
Fro bough to bough ; and, as him list, he eet
Here and there of buds and floures sweet.

And to the herber side was joyning
This faire tree, of which I have you told,
And at the last the brid began to sing,
Whan he had eaten what he eat wold ;
So passing sweetly, that by manifold
It was more pleasaunt than I could devise,
And whan his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so merry a note
Answered him, that all the wood rong
So sodainly, that as it were a sote,
I stood astonied, so was I with the song
Thorow ravished, that till late and long.
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where ;
And ayen, me thought, she song ever by mine ere.

Wherefore I waited about busily
On every side, if I her might see ;
And at the last I gan full well aspy
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side even right by me,
That gave so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglentere full well.

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
That, as me thought, I surely ravished was
Into Paradise, where my desire
Was for to be, and no further passe
As for that day, and on the sote grasse
I sat me downe, for as for mine entent,
The birdes song was more convenient,

And more pleasaunt to me by many fold,
Than meat or drinke, or any other thing,
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome savours eke so comforting,
That as I demed, sith the beginning
Of the world was never seene er than
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat the birds harkening thus,
Me thought that I heard voices sodainly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That ever any wight I trow truly
Heard in their life, for the armony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the voice to angels most was like.

At the last out of a grove even by,
That was right goodly and pleasant to sight,
I sie where there came singing lustily
A world of ladies; but, to tell aright
Their great beauty, it lieth not in my might,
Ne their array; neverthelesse I shall
Tell you a part, though I speake not of all.

The surcotes white of velvet wele sitting,
They were in cladde; and the semes echone,
As it were a manere garnishing,

Was set with emerauds one and one,
 By and by ; but many a riche stone
 Was set on the purfiles, out of dout,
 Of colors, sleves, and traines round about.

As great pearles round and orient,
 Diamonds fine, and rubies red,
 And many another stone of which I went
 The names now ; and everich on her head
 A rich fret of gold, which without dread
 Was full of stately riche stones set,
 And every lady had a chapelet

On her head of [branches] fresh and grene,
 So wele wrought and so mervelously,
 That it was a noble sight to sene,
 Some of laurer, and some full pleasauntly
 Had chapelets of woodbind, and sadly
 Some of *agnus castus* were also
 Chapelets fresh ; but there were many of tho

That daunced, and eke song full soberly,
 But all they yede in manner of compace,
 But one there yede in mid the company,
 Sole by her selfe, but all followed the pace
 That she kepte, whose heavenly figured face
 So pleasaunt was, and her wele shape person,
 That of beauty she past hem everichon.

And more richly beseene, by many fold
 She was also in every maner thing,
 On her head full pleasaunt to behold,
 A crowne of golde rich for any king,
 A braunch of *agnus castus* eke bearing
 In her hand ; and to my sight truly,
 She lady was of the company.

And she began a roundell lustely,
That "*Suse le foyle, devers moy,*" men call,
"*Siene et mon joly couer est endormy,*"
And than the company answered all,
With voices sweet entuned, and so small,
That me thought it the sweetest melody
That ever I heard in my life soothly.

And thus they came, dauncing and singing
Into the middes of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sitting,
And God wot me thought I was wel bigone,
For than I might avise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coud best dance or sing,
Or who most womanly was in all thing.

They had not daunced but a little throw,
Whan that I hearde ferre off sodainly,
So great a noise of thundering trumpes blow,
As though it should have departed the skie ;
And after that within a while I sie,
From the same grove where the ladies come out,
Of men of armes comming such a rout,

As all the men on earth had been assembled
In that place, wele horsed for the nones,
Stering so fast, that all the earth trembled :
But for to speake of riches and [of] stones,
And men and horse, I trow the large wones,
Of Pretir John, ne all his tresory,
Might not unneth have boght the tenth party

Of their array : who so list heare more,
I shall rehearse so as I can alite.
Out of the grove, that I spake of before,

I sie come first all in their clokes white,
A company, that ware for their delite,
Chapelets fresh of okes seriall,
Newly sprong, and trumpets they were all.

On every trumpe hanging a broad banere
Of fine tartarium were full richely bete,
Every trumpet his lords armes bere,
About their neckes with great pearles sete
Collers brode, for cost they would not lete,
As it would seem, for their schochones echone,
Were set about with many a precious stonc.

Their horse harneis was all white also,
And after them next in one company,
Came kings of armes, and no mo
In clokes of white cloth of gold richly ;
Chapelets of greene on their heads on hic,
The crowns that they on their scochones bere,
Were set with pearle, ruby, and saphere.

And eke great diamondes many one,
But all their horse harneis and other geare
Was in a sute according everichone,
As ye have heard the foresaid trumpets were ;
And by seeming they were nothing to lere,
And their guiding, they did so manerly,
And after hem came a great company

Of heraudes and pursevauntes eke,
Arraied in clothes of white velvet,
And hardily they were no thing to seke,
How they on them should the harneis set ;
And every man had on a chapelet ;
Scochones and eke horse harneis indede,
They had in sute of hem that 'fore hem yede.

Next after hem came in armour bright
All save their heades, seemely knightes nine,
And every claspe and naile as to my sight
Of their harneis were of red golde fine,
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappoures of their stedes strong,
Wide and large, that to the ground did hong.

And every bosse of bridle and paitrell
That they had, was worth, as I would wene,
A thousand pound; and on their heades well
Dressed were crownes of laurer grene,
The best made that ever I had sene,
And every knight had after him riding
Three henchemen on him awaiting.

Of which every [first] on a short tronchoun
His lordes helme bare, so richly dight,
That the worst was worthe the ransoun
Of [any] king; the second a shield bright
Bare at his backe; the thred bare upright
A mighty spere, full sharpe ground and kene,
And every childe ware of leaves grene

A fresh chapelet upon his haires bright;
And clokes white of fine velvet they ware,
Their steeds trapped and raied right
Without difference as their lordes were,
And after hem on many a fresh corsere,
There came of armed knights such a rout,
That they bespread the large field about.

And all they ware after their degrees
Chapelets newe made of laurer grene,
Some of [the] oke, and some of other trees,

Some in their honds bare boughes shene,
Some of laurer, and some of okes kene,
Some of hauthorne, and some of [the] woodbind,
And many mo which I had not in mind.

And so they came, their horses freshly stering
With bloody sownes of hir troupes loud ;
There sie I many an uncouth disguising
In the array of these knightes proud,
And at the last as evenly as they coude,
They took their places in middes of the mede,
And every knight turned his horses hede

To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
In the rest ; and so justes began
On every part about here and there ;
Some brake his spere, somè drew down hors and
About the field astray the steedes ran ; [man,
And to behold their rule and governaunce,
I you ensure it was a great pleasaunce.

And so the justes last an houre and more ;
But tho, that crowned were in laurer grene,
Wan the prise ; their dints were so sore,
That there was none ayenst hem might sustene,
And the justing all was left off clene,
And fro their horse the ninth alight anone,
And so did all the remnant everichone.

And forth they yede togider, twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight,
Toward the ladies on the greene plain,
That song and daunced as I said now right :
The ladies as soone as they goodly might,
They brake of both the song and dance,
And yede to meet hem with ful glad semblaunce.

And every lady tooke full womanly
By the hond a knight, and forth they yede
Unto a faire laurer that stood fast by,
With leves lade the boughes of great brede ;
And to my dome there never was indede
Man, that had seene halfe so faire a tre ;
For underneath there might it well have be

An hundred persons at their owne plesaunce
Shadowed fro the heat of Phebus bright,
So that they should have felt no grevaunce
Of raine ne haile that hem hurte might,
The savour eke rejoyce would any wight
That had be sicke or melancolious ;
It was so very good and vertuous.

And with great reverence they enclined low
To the tree so soot, and faire of hew ;
And after that, within a little throw,
They began to sing and daunce of new,
Some song of love, some plaining of untrew,
Environing the tree that stood upright ;
And ever yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last I cast mine eye aside,
And was ware of a lusty company
That came roming out of the field wide,
Hond in hond a knight and a lady ;
The ladies all in surcotes, that richely
Purfiled were with many a rich stone,
And every knight of green ware mantles on,

Embrouded well so as the surcotes were,
And everich had a chapelet on her hed,
Which did right well upon the shining here,

Made of goodly floures white and red,
The knightes eke that they in honde led
In sute of hem ware chapelets everichone,
And before hem went minstrels many one,

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and sautry
Alle in greene; and on their heades bare
Of divers floures made full craftely
All in a sute goodly chapelets they ware;
And so dauncing into the mede they fare.
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All oversprad with floures in compas.

Whereto they enclined everichone
With great reverence, and that full humbly;
And at the last there began anone
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie;
For as me thought among her notes swete,
She said "*Si douce et la Margarete.*"

Than they alle answered her in fere,
So passingly well, and so pleasauntly,
That it was a blisful noise to here,
But I n'ot how it happed suddainly,
As about noone the Sunne so fervently
Waxe hote, that the prety tender floures
Had lost the beauty of hir fresh coloures.

Forshronke with heat, the ladies eke to-brent,
That they ne wist where they hem might bestow;
The knightes swelt for lack of shade nie shent,
And after that within a little throw,
The wind began so sturdily to blow,
That down goeth all the floures everichone,
So that in all the mede there left not one;

Save such as succoured were among the leves
Fro every storme that might hem assaile,
Growing under [the] hegges and thicke greves ;
And after that there came a storme of haile,
And raine in fere, so that withouten faile,
The ladies ne the knightes n'ade o threed
Drie on them, so dropping was hir weed.

And whan the storm was cleane passed away,
Tho in white that stood under the tree,
They felt nothing of the great affray,
That they in greene without had in ybe,
To them they yede for routh and pite,
Them to comfort after their great disease,
So faine they were the helplesse for to ease.

Than I was ware how one of hem in grene
Had on a crowne rich and well sitting,
Wherefore I demed well she was a quene,
And tho in greene on her were awaiting ;
The ladies then in white that were comming
Toward them, and the knights in fere
Began to comfort hem, and make hem chere.

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Took by the hond the queen that was in grene,
And said, " Suster, I have right great pity
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So long, alas ! and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall do you the ease,

" In all the pleasure that I can or may ;"
Whereof the other humbly as she might,
Thanked her ; for in right ill array

She was with storm and heat I you behight,
And every lady then anone right
That were in white, one of them took in grene
By the hond, which whan the knights had sene,

In like wise ech of them tooke a knight
Cladde in greene, and forth with hem the fare,
To an hegge, where they anon right,
To make their justs they would not spare
Boughes to hew down, and eke trees square,
Wherwith they made hem stately fires great,
To dry their clothes that were wringing weat.

And after that of hearbes that there grew,
They made for blisters of the Sunne brenning,
Very good and wholesome ointments new,
Where that they yede the sick fast anointing;
And after that they yede about gadering
Pleasaunt salades which they made hem eat,
For to refresh their great unkindly heat.

The lady of the Leafe then began to pray
Her of the Floure (for so to my seeming
They should be as by their array)
To soupe with her, and eke for any thing,
That she should with her all her people bring:
And she ayen in right goodly manere,
Thanketh her of her most friendly cheare,

Saying plainely, that she would obay
With all her hert all her commaundement;
And then anon without lenger delay
The lady of the Leafe hath one ysent
For a palfray, after her intent,
Arrayed well and faire in harneis of gold,
For nothing lacked, that to him long shold.

And after that to all her company
She made to purvey horse and every thing
That they needed, and than full lustily,
Even by the herber where I was sitting
They passed all so pleasantly singing,
That it would have comforted any wight ;
But then I sie a passing wonder sight.

For then the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurer sate, and did her might
The whole service to sing longing to May,
All sodainly began to take her flight ;
And to the lady of the Leafe forthright
She flew, and set her on her hond softly,
Which was a thing I marveled of greatly.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medler tree
Was fled for heat into the bushes cold,
Unto the lady of the Flower gan flee,
And on her hond ne set him as he wold,
And pleasauntly his winges gan to fold ;
And for to sing they pained hem both as sore,
As they had do of all the day before.

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,
And all the rout of knightes eke in fere ;
And I that had seen all this wonder case,
Thought I would assay in some manere,
To know fully the trouth of this matere ;
And what they were that rode so pleasantly :
And whan they were the herber passed by,

I drest me forth, and happed to mete anon
Right a faire lady, I do you ensure ;
And she came riding by herselfe alone,

Alle in white, with semblance ful demure ;
 I salued her, and bad good aventure
 Might her befall, as I coul most humbly ;
 And she answered, “ My doughter, gramercy !”

“ Madame” (quoth I) “ if that I durst enquire
 Of you, I would faine of that company
 Wite what they be that past by this arbere ?”
 And she ayen answered right friendly ;
 “ My faire doughter, all tho that passed here by
 In white clothing, be servaunts everichone
 Unto the Leafe, and I my selfe am one.

“ See ye not her that crowned is” (quoth she)
 “ All in white ?”—“ Madame” (quoth I) “ yes :”
 “ That is Diane, goddessse of chastite,
 And for because that she a maiden is,
 In her hond the braunch she beareth this,
 That *agnus castus* men call properly ;
 And all the ladies in her company,

“ Which ye se of that hearbe chapelets weare,
 Be such as han kept alway hir maidenheed :
 And all they that of laurer chapelets beare,
 Be such as hardy were and manly indeed,
 Victorious name which never may be dede !
 And all they were so worthy of hir hond,
 In hir time that none might hem withstond.

“ And tho that weare chapelets on their hede
 Of fresh woodbind, be such as never were
 To love untrue in word, thought, ne dede,
 But aye stedfast, ne for pleasaunce, ne fere,
 Though that they should their hertes all to-tere,
 Would never flit but ever were stedfast,
 Til that their lives there asunder brast.”

“ Now faire madame” (quoth I) “ yet I would
Your ladiship if that it mighte be, [pray,
That I might knowe by some maner way,
Sith that it hath liked your beaute,
The trowth of these ladies for to tell me,
What that these knightes be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and weare the flour ?

“ And why that some did reverence to that tre,
And some unto the plot of floures faire ?”

“ With right good will my fair doughter (quoth
she)

“ Sith your desire is good and debonaire ;
Tho nine crowned be very exemplaire,
Of all honour longing to chivalry,
And those certaine be called the Nine Worthly,

“ Which ye may see [now] riding all before,
That in hir time did many a noble dede,
And for their worthines full oft have bore
The crowne of laurer leaves on their hede,
As ye may in your old bookes rede ;
And how that he that was a conquerour,
Had by laurer alway his most honour.

“ And tho that beare bowes in their hond
Of the precious laurer so notable,
Be such as were, I woll ye understond,
Noble knightes of the round table,
And eke the Douseperis honourable,
Which they beare in signe of victory ;
It is witnesse of their deeds mightily.

“ Eke there be knightes old of the garter,
That in hir time did right worthily,
And the honour they did to the laurer,

Is for by it they have their laud wholly,
Their triumph eke, and martiall glory ;
Which unto them is more parfite richesse,
Than any wight imagine can or gesse.

“ For one leafe given of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
And it be done so as it ought to be,
Is more honour than any thing earthly ;
Witnes of Rome that founder was truly
Of all knighthood and deeds marvelous,
Record I take of Titus Livius.

“ And as for her that crowned is in greene,
It is Flora, of these floures goddessse,
And all that here on her awaiting beene,
It are such folk that loved idlenesse,
And not delite in no businesse,
But for to hunt and hauke, and pley in medes,
And many other suchlike idle dedes.

And for the great delite and pleasaunce
They have to the floure, and so reverently
They unto it do such obeisaunce
As ye may se.”—“ Now faire Madame”(quoth I)
“ If I durst aske what is the cause and why,
That knightes have the ensigne of honour,
Rather by the leafe than the flour.”

“ Soothly doughter”(quod she) “this is the trouth ;
For knightes ever should be persevering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth ;
Fro wele to better in all manner thing ;
In signe of which with leaves aye lasting,
They be rewarded after their degre,
Whose lusty green May, may not appaired be,

“ But aie keping their beautie fresh and greene,
For there n’is storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, winde nor frosts kene;
Wherfore they have this property and grace
And for the floure, within a little space
Woll be [all] lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no greevance may endure.

“ And every storme will blow them soone away,
Ne they last not but for a season;
That is the cause, the very trowth to say,
That they may not by no way of reason
Be put to no such occupation.”

“Madame”(quoth I) “with all mine whole servise
I thanke you now, in my most humble wise.

“ For now I am ascertained throughly,
Of every thing [that] I desired to know.”
I am right glad that I have said sothly,
Ought to your pleasure if ye will me trow :”
(Quod she ayen) “ but to whom do ye owe
Your service? and which will ye honour,
Tel me I pray, this yere? the Leafe or the Flour?”

“ Madame” (quoth I) “ though I least worthy,
Unto the Leafe I owe mine observaunce :”

“ That is” (quod she) “ right well done certainly;
And I pray God to honour you avaunce,
And kepe you fro the wicked remembraunce
Of Malebouch, and all his crueltie,
And all that good and well conditioned be.

“ For here may I no lenger now abide,
I must follow the great company,
That ye may see yonder before you ride.”

And forth as I couth most humbly,
I tooke my leve of her; as she gan hie,
After them as fast as ever she might,
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night

And put all that I had seene in writing
Under support of them that lust it to rede.
O little booke, thou art so unconning,
How darst thou put thy self in prees for drede?
It is wonder that thou wexest not rede!
Sith that thou wost full lite who shall behold
Thy rude langage, full boistously unfold.

EXPLICIT.



CHAUCER'S A. B. C.

CALLED

LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

Chaucer's A. B. C. called La Priere de nostre Dame :
made, as some say, at the request of Blanch, duchess of
Lancaster, as a prayer for her private use, being a woman
in her religion very devout.

A.

ALMIGHTY and all merciable queene,
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,
To have release of sinne, of sorrow, of tene,
Glorious Virgine of all flouris flour,
To thee I flee confounded in errour,
Helpe and releeve almighty debonaire,
Have mercy of mine perillous langour,
Venquist me hath my cruell adversaire.

B.

Bounty so fixe hath in my herte his tent,
That well I wote thou wilt my succour be,
Thou canst not warn that with good entent,
Axeth thine helpe, thine herte is aye so free :
Thou art largesse of plaine felicite,
Haven and refute of quiete and of rest,
Lo how that thevis seven chasen me,
Helpe lady bright, or that mine ship to brest.

C.

Comfort is none, but in you lady dere,
For lo mine sinne and mine confusioun,
Which ought not in thine presence for to apere,
Han taken on me a greevous actioun,
Of veray right and disperatioun,
And as by right they mighten well sustene,
That I were worthy mine damnatioun,
Nere mercy of you blisfull quene.

D.

Dout is there none, queen of misericord,
That thou n'art cause of grace and mercy here,
God vouchedsafe through thee with us to accord :
For certis, Christ is blisful modir dere,
Were now the bow bent in swiche manere,
As it was first of justice and of ire,
The rightfull God would of no mercy here :
But through thee han we grace as we desire.

E.

Ever hath mine hope of refute in thee be :
For here beforne full oft in many a wise,
Unto mercy hast thou received me,
But mercy lady at the great assise,
Whan we shall come before the high justise,
So little frute shall than in me ben found,
That but thou or that day correct me,
Of very right mine werk will me confound.

F.

Flying, I flee for succour to thine tent,
Me for to hide fro tempest full of drede,
Beseking you, that ye you not absent,
Though I be wicke : O help yet at this nede,

All have I been a beast in wit and dede,
Yet lady thou mee close in with thine own grace,
Thine enemy and mine, lady take hede,
Unto mine death in point is me to chase.

G.

Gracious maid and modir, which that never
Were bitter nor in earth nor in see,
But full of sweetnesse and of mercy ever,
Help that mine fader be not wroth with me :
Speake thou, for I ne dare him not see,
So have I done in earth, alas the while,
That certes but if thou mine succour be,
To sinke eterne he will mine ghost exile.

H.

He vouchedesafe, tell him, as was his will,
Become a man as for our alliaunce,
And with his blood he wrote that blisfull bill
Upon the crosse as generall acquitaunce,
To every penitent in full criaunce :
And therefore lady bright, thou for us prey,
Than shalt thou stent all his greevaunce,
And maken our foe to failen of his prey.

I.

I wote well thou wilt been our succour,
Thou art so full of bounty in certaine,
For whan a soule falleth in errour,
Thine pity goeth, and haleth him againe,
Than maketh thou his peace with his sovereign,
And bringest him out of the crooked strete :
Who so thee loveth, shall not love in vaine,
That shall he find, as he the life shall lete.

K.

Kalenderis enlumined been they,
That in this world been lighted with thine name,
And who so goeth with thee the right wey,
Him that not drede in soule to been lame,
Now queen of comfort, sith thou art the same,
To whom I seech for my medicine :
Let not mine fo no more mine wound entame,
Mine hele into thine hond all I resine.

L.

Lady, thine sorrow can I not portrey
Under that crosse, ne his grevous pennaunce :
But for your bothis peine, I you prey,
Let not our alder fo make his bostaunce,
That he hath in his lestis with mischaunce,
Convict that, ye both han bought so dere :
As I said erst, thou ground of substaunce,
Continue on us thine pitous eyen clere.

M.

Moyes that saw the bosh of flambis rede
Brenning, of which than never a sticke brend,
Was sign of thine unwemmed maideuhede,
Thou art the bosh, on which there can descend
The Holyghost, which that Moyes weend
Had been on fire : and this was in figure.
Now lady from the fire us defend,
Which that in Hell eternally shall dure.

N.

Noble princesse, that never haddest pere,
Certes if any comfort in us bee,
That comneth of thee, Christis moder dere,
We han none other melody ne glee,

Us to rejoyce in our adversite,
Ne advocat none, that will and dare so prey
For us, and that for as little hire as ye,
That helpen for an Avemary or twey.

O.

O very light of eyen tho been blind,
O very lust of labour and distresse,
O treasorere of bounty to mankind,
The whom God chese to moder for humblesse,
From his ancelle he made thee maistresse
Of Heaven and Earth, our bill up to bede,
This world awaiteth ever on thine goodnes,
For thou ne failedest never wight at nede.

P.

Purpose I have sometime for to enquire,
Wherefore and why the Holyghost thee sought,
Whan Gabrielis voice come to thine ere,
He not to werre us swich a wonder wrought,
But for to save us, that sithen bought :
Than needeth us no weapon us to save,
But onely there we did not as us ought,
Do penitence, and mercy aske and have.

Q.

Queen of comfort, right whan I me bethink,
That I agilt have both him and thee,
And that mine soule is worthy for to sinke :
Alas I caitife, wheder shall I flee,
Who shall unto thine sonne mine mean be :
Who but thine selfe, that art of pity well,
Thou hast more routh on our adversitie,
Than in this world might any tongue tell.

R.

Redresse me moder, and eke me chastise,
 For certainly my faders chastising
 Ne dare I not abiden in no wise,
 So hideous is his full reckening,
 Moder of whom our joy gan to spring,
 Be ye mine judge, and eke my soules leech,
 For ever in you is pity abounding,
 To each that of pity will you beseech.

S.

Sooth is, he ne graunteth no pity
 Without thee: for God of his goodnesse
 Forgiveth none, but it like unto thee:
 He hath thee made vicaire and maistresse
 Of all this world, and eke governeresse
 Of Heaven: and represseth his justise
 After thine will: and therefore in witanesse
 He hath thee crowned in so royal wise.

T.

Temple devout, ther God chese his wonning,
 For which these misbeleaved deprived been,
 To you mine soule penitent I bring,
 Receive me, for I can no ferther flee.
 With thornis venemous, Heaven quene,
 For which the erth accursed was ful sore,
 I am so wounded, as ye may well see,
 That I am lost almost, it smert so sore,

V.

Virgine that art so noble of apparaile,
 That ledest us into the high toure
 Of Paradise, thou me wish and counsaile,
 How I may have thy grace and thy succour:

All have I been in filth and in errour,
Lady on that countrey thou me adjourne,
That cleaped is thine bench of fresh flour,
There as that mercy ever shall sojourne.

X.

Xen thine sonne that in this world alight
Upon a crosse to suffer his passioun,
And suffred eke that Longeus his hart pight,
And made his herte blood renne adoun,
And all this was for my salvatioun :
And I to him am fals and eke unkind,
And yet he will not mine dampnatioun :
This thanke I you, succour of all mankind.

Y.

Ysaac was figure of his death certaine,
That so ferre forth his fader would obey,
That him ne rought nothing for to be slain :
Right so thy sonne list a lambe to dey :
Now lady full of mercy I you prey,
Sith he his mercy sured me so large,
Be ye not scant, for all we sing or say,
That ye been fro vengeance aye our targe.

Z.

Zacharie you clepith the open well,
That wisht sinfull soule out of his guilt,
Therefore this lesson out I will to tell,
That nere thine tender heart, we were spilt.
Now lady bright, sith thou canst and wilt
Been to the seed of Adam merciabe,
Bring us to that paleis that is built
To penitendis, that ben to mercie able.



CERTAIN BALLADES.

BALADE SENT TO K. RICHARD.

SOMETIME the world so stedfast was and
stable,
That mannes word was an obligatioun,
And now it is so false and deceivable,
That word and deed as in conclusioun
Is nothing like, for tourned is up so down
All the world, through mede and fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lacke of stedfastnesse.

What maketh the world to be so variable
But lust, that men have in dissension,
For among us a man is hold unable,
But if he can by some collusion
Doe his neighbour wrong and oppression :
What causeth this but wilfull wretchednesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

Trouth is put downe, reason is hold fable,
Vertue hath now no domination,
Pity is exiled, no man is merciable,
Through covetise is blente discretion,
The world hath made a permutation,
Fro right to wrong, fro trouth to fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lacke of stedfastnesse.

LENVOYE.

Prince desire to be honourable,
 Cherish thy folke, and hate extortion,
 Suffer nothing that may be reprovablen
 To thine estate, done in thy region,
 Shew forth the yerd of castigation,
 Drede God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
 And wed thy folke ayen to stedfastnesse.

EXPLICIT.

GOOD COUNSAILE OF CHAUCER.

FLY fro the prease, and dwell with soothfast-
 nesse,
 Suffise unto thy good though it be small,
 For horde hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
 Prease hath envy, and wele is blent over all,
 Savour no more than thee behove shall,
 Rede well thy selfe that other folke canst rede,
 And trouthe thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

Paine thee not ech crooked to redresse
 In trust of her that tourneth as a ball,
 Great rest standeth in little businesse,
 Beware also to spurn agayne a nall,
 Strive not as doth a crocke with a wall,
 Deme thy selfe that demest others dede,
 And trouthe thee shall deliver it is no drede.

That thee is sent receive in buxomnesse,
 The wrastling of this world asketh a fall,

Here is no home, here is but wilderness,
 Forth pilgrime, forth beast out of thy stall,
 Looke up on high, and thanke God of all,
 Weive thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lede,
 And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLADE OF THE VILLAGE WITHOUT PAINTING.

PLAINTIFE TO FORTUNE.

THIS wretched worldes transmutation,
 As wele and wo, now poor, and now honour,
 Without order or due discretion,
 Governed is by Fortunes errour,
 But natheless the lacke of her favour
 Ne may not doe me sing, though that I die,
J'ay tout perdu, mon temps et mon labour,
 For finally fortune I defie.

Yet is me left the sight of my reasoun,
 To know friend fro foe in thy mirrour,
 So much hath yet thy tourning up and doun
 Ytaught me to knowen in an hour,
 But truly no force of thy reddour
 To him that over himselfe hath maistrie,
 My suffisaunce shall be my succour,
 For finally fortune I defie.

O Socrates, thou stedfast champion,
 She might never be thy turmentour,

Thou never dredest her oppression,
 Ne in her chere found thou no favour,
 Thou knew the deceit of her colour,
 And that her moste worship is for to lie,
 I know her eke a false dissimulour,
 For finally fortune I defie.

THE ANSWERE OF FORTUNE.

No man is wretched, but himselfe it wene,
 Ne that hath in himselfe suffisaunce,
 Why saist thou than I am to thee so kene,
 That hast thy selfe out of my governance?
 Say thus, graunt mercy of thine habundance
 That thou hast lent or this, thou shalt not strive,
 What wost thou yet how I thee woll avance,
 And eke thou hast thy best friend alive.

I have thee taught devision betweene
 Friend of effect, and friend of countenaunce,
 Thee needeth not the gall of an hine,
 That cureth eyen darke for her pennaunce
 Now seest thou clere that were in ignoraunce,
 Yet holt thine anker, and yet thou maist arrive
 There bounty beareth the key of my substance,
 And eke thou hast thy best friend alive.

How many have I refused to sustene,
 Sith I have thee fostred in thy pleasaunce,
 Wolt thou than make a statute on thy quene,
 That I shall be aye at thine ordinaunce,
 Thou born art in my reigne of variaunce,
 About the whele with other must thou drive,
 My lore is bet, than wicke is thy grevaunce,
 And eke thou hast thy best friend alive.

THE ANSWERE TO FORTUNE.

Thy lore I dampne, it is adversity,
My frend maist thou not reve blind goddesse,
That I thy friends know, I thanke it thee,
Take hem againe, let hem go lie a presse,
The niggardes in keeping hir richesse,
Pronostike is, thou wolt hir toure assaile,
Wicke appetite commeth aye before sicknesse,
In general this rule may not faile.

FORTUNE.

Thou pinchest at my mutability,
For I thee lent a droppe of my richesse,
And now me liketh to withdraw me,
Why shouldest thou my royalty oppresse,
The sea may ebbe and flow more and lesse,
The welken bath might to shine, rain, and hail,
Right so must I kithe my brotilnesse,
In generall this rule may not fail.

THE PLAINTIFE.

Lo, the execution of the majesty,
That all purveigheth of his rightwisenesse,
That same thing fortune clepen ye,
Ye blind beasts full of leaudnesse,
The Heaven hath property of sikernesse,
This world hath ever restlesse travaile,
The last day is end of mine entresse,
In generall this rule may not faile.

TH'ENVOYE OF FORTUNE.

Princes I pray you of your gentillesse
Let not this man and me thus cry and plain,

And I shall quite you this businesse,
 And if ye liste releve him of his pain,
 Pray ye his best frende of his noblesse,
 That to some better state he may attain.

LENVOY DE CHAUCER.

A SCOGAN.

TO broken been the statutes hie in Heaven,
 That create were eternally t'endure,
 Sithe that I see the bright goddes seven,
 Mowe wepe and waile, and passion endure,
 As may in yearth a mortall creature :
 Alas, fro whens may this thing procede,
 Of which errour I die almost for drede.

By word eterne whilom was it shape,
 That fro the fifth cercle in no manere,
 Ne might of teares doune escape,
 But now so weepeth Venus in her sphere,
 That with her teares she wol drench us here,
 Alas Scogan this is for thine offence,
 Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.

Hast thou not said in blasphemie of the goddis,
 Through pride, or through thy gret rekernes,
 Such things as in the law of love forbode is,
 That for thy lady saw not thy distresse,
 Therfore thou yave her up at Mighelmesse ?
 Alas Scogan of olde folke ne yong,
 Was never erst Scogan blamed for his tong.

Thou drew in scorne Cupide eke to record,
Of thilke rebell word that thou hast spoken,
For which he woll no lenger be thy lord,
And Scogan, though his bow be not broken,
He woll not with his arowes be ywroken
On thee ne me, ne none of our figure,
We shall of him have neither hurte ne cure.

Now certes frend I drede of thine unhape,
Lest for thy gylte the wrecche of love procede
On all hem that been hore and round of shape,
That be so likely folke to spede,
Than we shall of our labour have our mede,
But well I wot thou wolt answeere and say,
Lo old Grisell list to renne and play.

Nay Scogan say not so, for I me excuse,
God helpe me so, in no rime doubtles,
Ne thinke I never of sleepe wake my muse,
That rusteth in my sheath still in pees,
While I was yong I put her forth in prees,
But all shall passe that men prose or rime,
Take every man his tourne as for his time.

Scogan thou knelest at the stremes hedde
Of grace, of all honour, and of worthiness,
In th'ende of which I am dull as dedde,
Forgotten in solitary wilderness,
Yet Scogan thinke on Tullius' kindness,
Mind thy frende there it may fructifie,
Farewel, and looke thou never eist love delie.

GO forth king, rule thee by sapience,
 Bishop be able to minister doctrine,
 Lorde to true counsaile yeve audience,
 Womanhode to chastity ever encline,
 Knight let thy deedes worship determine,
 Be righteous judge in saving thy name,
 Rich do almose, lest thou lese bliss with shame.

People obey your king and the law,
 Age be ruled by good religion,
 True servaunt be dredfuland kepe thee under aw,
 And thou poore, fie on presumption,
 Inobedience to youth is utter destruction,
 Remember you how God hath set you lo,
 And doe your part as ye be ordeined to.

TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

TO you my purse and to none other wight
 Complaine I, for ye be my lady dere,
 I am sorry now that ye be light,
 For certes ye now make me heavy chere,
 Me were as lefe laid upon a bere,
 For which unto your mercy thus I erie,
 Be heavy againe or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night,
 That I of you the blissful sowne may here,
 Or see your colour like the Sunne bright,
 That of yelowness had never pere,

Ye be my life, ye be my hertes stere,
Queene of comfort and of good companie,
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

Now purse that art to me my lives light,
And saviour, as downe in this world here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you woll not be my treasure,
For I am shave as nere as any frere,
But I pray unto your curtesie,
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD

MADE BY CHAUCER, TEACHING WHAT IS GENTILNESS, OR
WHOM IS WORTHY TO BE CALLED GENTILL.

THE first stocke father of gentilnes,
What man desireth gentil for to bee,
Must followe his trace, and all his wittes dres,
Vertue to love, and vices for to flee,
For unto vertue longeth dignitee,
And not the revers falsly dare I deme,
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe,

The first stocke was full of rightwisnes,
Trewe of his worde, sober, pitous and free,
Clene of his goste and loved besinesse,
Against the vice of slouth in honeste,
And but his heire love vertue as did he,
He is not gentill though he rich seme,
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

Vicesse may well be heir to old richesse,
But there may no man, as men may wel see,
Bequethe his heire his vertues noblencesse,
That is appropriated unto no degree,
But to the first father in majestee,
That maketh his heires them that him queme
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

EXPLICIT.

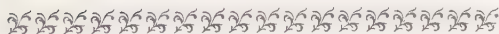


A PROVERB

AGAINST COVETISE AND NEGLIGENCE.

WHAT shall these clothes manifold
Lo this hote somers day,
After great heat commeth cold,
No man cast his pilche away,
Of all this world the large compasse
It will not in mine armes twaine,
Who so mokel woll embrace,
Litel thereof he shall distraine.

EXPLICIT.



THE COMPLAINT OF PITIE.

HOW PITIE IS DEAD AND BURIED IN

A GENTLE HERTE.

PITIE that I have sought so yore agon
With herte sore, and full of besic paine,
That in this worlde was never wight so wo
Without deathe, and if I shall not faine,
My purpose was to Pitie to complaine
Upon the cruelty and tyranny
Of Love, that for my trouth doth me dye.

And that I by length of certaine yeares
Had ever in one sought a time to speke,
To Pitie ran I, all bespreint with teares,
To prayen her on Cruelty me awreke,
Or tell her any of my paines smerte,
I found her dead and buried in an herte.

Adowne I fell, whan I saw the herse
Dead as a stone, while that swoone me last,
But up I rose with colour full diverse,
And pitously on her mine eyen I cast,
And nearer the corse I gan preasen fast,
And for the soule I shope me for to pray,
I was but lorne, there was no more to say.

Thus am I slaine, sith that Pitie is dead,
Alas the day that ever it should fall,
What maner man dare now hold up his head
To whom shall now any sorrowful herte call,
Now Cruelty hath cast to slee us all
In idle hope, folke rechelesse of paine,
Sith she is dead, to whom shall we complaine.

But yet increaseth me this wonder new,
That no wight wote that she is dead but I,
So many men as in her time her knew,
And yet she deyde so suddainly,
For I have sought her ever full busily,
Sith I had first wit or mind,
But she was dead, ere I could her find.

About her herse there stoodden lustily
Withouten any mo, as thoughte me,
Bounty, perfitley well armed and richely,
And fresh Beaute, Lust and Jolite,

Assured-manner, Youth and Honeste,
Wisedome, Estate, Drede, and Governauce,
Confedred both by bond and alliaunce.

A complaint had I written in my honde,
To have put to Pitie, as a bill,
But I there all this company fonde,
That rather would all my cause spill,
Than do me helpe: I hold my plaint still
For to those folke withouten faile,
Without Pitie there may no bill availe.

Than leave all vertues, save only Pitie,
Keping the corse, as ye have heard me saine,
Confedred by honde until Crueltie,
And be assented whan I shall be slaine
And I have put my complainte up againe,
For to my foes my bill I dare not shewe
The effect, which saith thus in wordes fewe.

“ Humblest of herte, highest of reverence,
Benigne floure, croune of vertues all,
Sheweth unto your royall excellence
Your servaunt, if I durst me so call,
His mortall harme, in which he is yfall,
And nought all only for his wofull fare,
But for your renome, as he shall declare.

“ It standeth thus, that contraire Crueltie
Allied is ayenst your regaltie
Under colour of womanly beaultie,
(For men should not know her tyrannie)
With Bountie, Gentillesse, and Courtesie,
And hath deprived you of your place,
That is hie beaultie, appertenaunt to your grace.

“ For Kindly, by your heritage right
Ye be annexed ever unto Bountie,
And verely ye ought to doe your might
To helpe Trough in his adversitie :
Ye be also the croune of beautie,
And certes, if ye want in these twaine
The world is lore, there is no more to saine.

“ Eke what availeth manner and gentillesse
Without you, benigne creature ?
Shall Crueltie be your governeresse,
Alas, what herte may it long endure ?
Wherefore but ye rather take cure
To breake that perilous alliaunce,
Ye sleen hem that been in your obeysaunce.

“ And further, if ye suffer this,
Your renome is fordo in a throw,
There shall no man wete what pitie is,
Alas, that ever your renome is fall so low,
Ye be also fro your heritage ythrow
But Crueltie, that occupieth your place,
And we dispaired that seeken your grace.

“ Have mercy on me, thou Herenus, queene,
That you have sought so tenderly and sore,
Let some streame of light on me be seene,
That Love and drede you ever lenger the more,
For soothly to saine, I beare so sore,
And though I be not conning for to plaine,
For Goddes love have mercy on my paine.

“ My paine is this, that nought so I desire,
That have I not, ne nothing like thereto
And ever setteth Desire mine herte on fire,

Eke on that other side where that I go,
What maner thing that may encrease my wo,
That have I ready unsought every where.
Me lacketh but my death, and then my bere.

“What nedeth to shew parcell of my paine,
Sith every wo, that herte may bethinke,
I suffer, and yet I dare not to you plaine,
For well I wote, though I wake or winke,
Ye recke not whether I flete or sinke,
And nathelesse yet my trouth I shall susteine
Unto my death, and that shall well be sene.

“This is to saine, I will be yours ever,
Though ye me slee by crueltie your fo,
Algate my spirit shall never discover
Fro your service, fro any paine or wo
Sith ye be yet dead, alas, that it is so!
Thus for your death I maye wepe and plaine
With herte sore, and full of busie paine.

EXPLICIT.

VIRELAI.

A LONE walking
 In thought plaining
 And sore sighing
 All desolate.

Me remembring
 Of my living
 My death wishing
 Both early and late.

Infortunate
 Is so my fate
 That wote ye what
 Out of measure

My life I hate :
 Thus desperate
 In such poor estate
 Do I endure.

Of other cure
 Am I not sure
 Thus to endure
 Is hard certain.

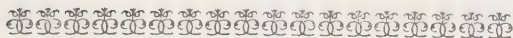
Such is my ure
 I you ensure
 What creature
 May have more pain.

My truth so plain
 Is taken in vain
 And great disdain
 In remembraunce

Yet I full fain
Would me complain
Me to abstain
From this penaunce.

But in substaunce
None allegeaunce
Of my grevaunce
Can I not find.

Right so my chaunce
With displesaunce
Doth me avaunce
And thus an end.



The Lines entitled "Chaucer's Prophecy" were found, with the following Variations, on the flyleaf of a miscellaneous old MS. containing the Meditations of St. Anselm, and other devotional pieces in Latin. The date at the end of the Volume, but in a different hand, is M.CCC.LXXXI.

QWAN prestis faylin in her sawes
And Lordis turnin Goddis lawes
Ageynis ryt.

And lecherie is holdin as privy solas
And robberie as fre purchas
Bewar thanne of ille

Than schall the Lond of Albion
Turnin to confusion
As sumtyme it befelle

*Ora pro Anglia Sancta Maria. quod Thomas
Cantuarie.*

Sweete Jhesu heven-king
 Ffayr and beste of alle thyng
 You bringe us owt of this morning
 To come to the at owre ending.

Then follow some Monkish Latin Rhymes.
 S. W. S.



CHAUCER'S WORDS UNTO HIS OWN SCRIVENER.

ADAM Scrivener if ever it thee befall,
 Boece or Troilus for to write new,
 Under thy long locks thou maist have the scall,
 But after my making thou write more trew,
 So oft a day I mote thy werke renew,
 It to correct and eke to rubbe and scrape,
 And all is thorow thy negligence and rape.

THE END.





